

# **ATTACHMENT A**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 30, 2007

**HALLMARK CHANNEL DELIVERS HIGHEST-EVER OCTOBER AND THE  
NETWORK'S SECOND-HIGHEST MONTH OF ALL TIME**

**Nation's Leader in Family-Friendly Programming Ranks #7  
In Prime Time for Month**

Hallmark Channel, the nation's preeminent programmer of family-friendly programming, continues its ratings success story delivering its highest-ever October among HH delivery in both Prime Time and Total Day, and the channel's second-highest month of all time.

For October, the network ranked #7 in Prime Time HH rating with a 1.1 and also delivered a #9 ranking in W25-54 Total Day for the month.

The network ranked #9 in Prime Time HH rating (1.1) for the week ending October 28 among all ad-supported cable networks.

For the week of 10/1-10/7/07, the network ranked #5 with a 1.2 Prime Time HH rating; for the week of 10/8-10/14, it ranked #6 with a 1.1 Prime Time HH rating; and for the week of 10/15-10/21, it ranked #8 with a 1.1 Prime Time HH rating.

Hallmark Channel's October schedule featured several marathons including ones for "Perry Mason Movies," "Matlock Movies," "Murder, She Wrote Movies" the "Mystery Woman" franchise and an original movie marathon.

Source: Nielsen Media Research, 10/1-10/28/07

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 16, 2007

**HALLMARK CHANNEL CONTINUES TOP 10 RATINGS STREAK**

Hallmark Channel, the leading provider of family-friendly programming, has taken hold of the ratings top 10 yet again. At the close of the second full week of fourth quarter 2007, Hallmark Channel ranked #6 in Prime Time with a 1.1 HH rating and delivered 912,000 homes.

This week's ratings success is attributed to the network's strong scheduling tactics. Each night, the network aired a Prime Time line-up of favorite mystery movies and series, including "Murder, She Wrote," "Matlock" and "Perry Mason." This once again establishes Hallmark Channel as a leader in the mystery genre, a favorite among the network's viewers.

Source: Nielsen Media Research, 10/8-10/14/07

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 9, 2007

**HALLMARK CHANNEL BEGINS FOURTH QUARTER ON A HIGH NOTE –  
NETWORK RANKS #5 IN PRIME TIME FOR WEEK OF OCTOBER 1**

Hallmark Channel ranked #5 in Prime Time with a 1.2 HH rating for the week of October 1-7, the first full week of fourth quarter 2007. This success comes on the heels of last week's #8 Prime Time ranking and marks an increase of three full spots in the top 10. The network's ratings success continues to soar even amidst crowded broadcast and cable schedules, including new series premieres, NFL games and major league baseball division series.

The family-friendly network historically experiences stellar ratings during the final quarter of the year, underscored by its original holiday movies and theatrical movie premieres. In 2006, the network delivered its top two highest-ever-rated telecasts with the premiere of its original holiday movie "The Christmas Card," which scored an impressive 4.2 HH rating, and the U.S. television premiere of "March of the Penguins," with a 4.1 HH rtg.

Hallmark Channel will premiere four new original holiday movies this season: "A Grandpa for Christmas" (11/24), "All I Want for Christmas" (12/1), "The Note" (12/8) and "Love's Unfolding Dream" (12/15).

Source: Nielsen Media Research, 10/1-10/7/07

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 2, 2007

**HALLMARK CHANNEL RANKS IN PRIME TIME AND TOTAL DAY TOP 10 FOR  
THE WEEK, MONTH AND THIRD QUARTER 2007**

**Network Experiences Highest-Ever Quarter**

Hallmark Channel continues its strong ratings performance with a rare "hat trick" as the nation's leading family-friendly network closed the week of September 24-30, the month of September and third quarter '07 in the top 10 for Prime Time and Total Day household ratings. Third quarter was also the network's highest-rated quarter ever, among Total Day HH delivery.

For the week ending September 30, Hallmark Channel ranked #9 in Prime Time (0.9) and #10 in Total Day (0.7) HH ratings, among all ad-supported cable networks.

For the month of September, Hallmark Channel ranked #8 in Prime Time (1.1) and #9 in Total Day (0.7) HH ratings, among all ad-supported cable networks. The channel also ranked #8 in P2+ Prime Time rating (0.5).

Hallmark Channel continued its ratings momentum established in the first and second quarters where it was the #8 and #11 highest-rated network in Prime Time by scoring its highest-ever quarter in third quarter '07, landing it at #8 in Prime Time (1.1) and #10 in Total Day (0.7) HH ratings, among all ad-supported cable networks. The channel also ranked #6 in Prime Time P2+ rating and #10 in Total Day P2+ rating.

Once again, Hallmark Channel's unprecedented success is attributed to the popularity of its roster of high quality family-friendly original movies. In the third quarter, the network premiered "Avenging Angel" (7/7/07, 2.6 HH rtg), "Claire" (8/11/07, 2.1 HH rtg) and "Murder 101: If Wishes Were Horses" (8/18/07, 1.7 HH rtg).

Source: Nielsen Media Research, 1/1-4/1/07, 4/2-7/1/07, 7/2-9/30/07

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 28, 2007

**HALLMARK CHANNEL DELIVERS HIGHEST-EVER AUGUST:**

**NOW IN 85 MILLION HOMES**

**Family-Friendly Network Ranks #7 in Prime Time Weekly Rankings**

Hallmark Channel closes the summer on a ratings and distribution high. The family-friendly programmer delivered its highest-ever August and is now available in 85 million homes, an increase of 9.894 million homes year-to-date making it the third-highest increase among all measured networks.

The network also ranked #7 in Prime Time HH rating (1.2) for the week ending August 26.

In August 2007, Hallmark Channel delivered:

- Highest-ever August Prime Time HH delivery (1.028 million)
- Highest-ever August Total Day HH delivery (600,000)
- Highest-ever August P2+ Prime Time delivery (1.35 million)
- #7 ranking in Prime Time HH rating (1.2)

Hallmark Channel's August schedule featured two new original movies, "Claire," starring Valerie Bertinelli (2.1 HH rating) and "Murder 101: If Wishes Were Horses," starring Dick, Barry and Shane Van Dyke (1.7 HH rating). "Claire" ranked as the highest-rated ad-supported cable movie of the day (8/11/07) and tied as the highest-rated ad-supported cable movie of the week.

Source: Nielsen Media Research, 7/30-8/26/07

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 14, 2007

**MYSTERY GENRE CONTINUES TO THRILL FAMILIES ON HALLMARK CHANNEL**

**Original Movie "Claire" and "Murder, She Wrote" Marathon Leads Network to Rank #4 in Prime Time for the Week**

Hallmark Channel continues to entertain and thrill families with popular mystery genre offerings as seen by the recent performance of its original mystery movie premiere "Claire," starring Valerie Bertinelli, as well as a "Murder, She Wrote" marathon, hosted by the series' star Angela Lansbury, both on Saturday, August 11. The popularity of the genre catapulted the network to an impressive #4 ranking in Prime Time for the week of August 6-12 with a 1.3 HH rating.

"Claire" scored a 2.1 HH rating with over 1.7 million homes making it the highest-rated ad-supported cable movie of the day and tying as the highest-rated ad-supported cable movie of the week. "Claire" was seen by nearly 2.8 million unduplicated viewers P2+ and ranked second in the time period (Sat., 9-11 p.m., ET/PT) in HH and P2+ (1.0) ratings and fourth in W25-54 (0.7) rating.

The "Murder, She Wrote" marathon averaged a 1.0 HH rating (Sat., 1-9 p.m., ET/PT).

Source: Nielsen Media Research, 8/6-8/12/07

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# **CrownMedia**

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HOLDINGS, INC.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 8, 2007

**CROWN MEDIA TO LAUNCH HALLMARK MOVIE CHANNEL HD**  
**IN FIRST QUARTER 2008**

Henry Schleiff, President and CEO, Crown Media Holdings, Inc. – owner and operator of Hallmark Channel and Hallmark Movie Channel – announced today that the company will launch its first High Definition (HD) service in the first quarter of 2008 – Hallmark Movie Channel HD.

"This launch is in direct response to the growing demand for family-friendly content on television today," said Schleiff. "Once again the Hallmark brand delivers the very best in high-quality entertainment for families and offers distribution partners and advertisers an outlet to reach their consumers where they know they are spending time."

*Hallmark Movie Channel HD will be simulcast alongside Hallmark Movie Channel Standard Definition (SD), and will offer audiences an unparalleled viewing experience featuring a mix of original movies, mini-series and feature film debuts. The schedule is set to include a branded Friday night line-up of movies from the acclaimed Hallmark Hall of Fame library, and exclusive Saturday night premieres. The channel will also spotlight a major quarterly programming event, beginning with the four-hour mini-series "Son of the Dragon," starring David Carradine.*

Hallmark Movie Channel HD launches at a time of high demand from distribution partners hungry for family-friendly content amidst the threat of government regulation, and utilizes the latest technology available to programmers and audiences. Consumers are purchasing HD televisions at an increasingly rapid rate. According to Kagan Research, nearly 50% of all homes with cable or satellite television will have HD sets by the end of 2007. This number is an increase of almost 20% over last year and an extraordinary 40% over 2004.

(more)

**HALLMARK CHANNEL/ CROWN MEDIA TO LAUNCH HALLMARK MOVIE  
CHANNEL HD IN FIRST QUARTER 2008 – Page 2**

Crown Media Holdings, Inc. (NASDAQ: CRWN) owns and operates cable television channels dedicated to high quality, broad appeal, entertainment programming. The Company currently operates and distributes Hallmark Channel in the U.S. to more than 83 million subscribers. The program service is distributed through more than 5,300 cable systems and communities as well as direct-to-home satellite services across the country. Hallmark Channel consistently ranks among the top ten ad-supported cable networks in Prime Time and Total Day household ratings and is the nation's leading network in providing quality family programming. Crown Media also operates a second 24-hour linear channel, Hallmark Movie Channel. Significant investors in Crown Media Holdings include: Hallmark Entertainment Holdings, Inc., a subsidiary of Hallmark Cards, Incorporated, Liberty Media Corp., and J.P. Morgan Partners (BHCA), LP, each through their investments in Hallmark Entertainment Investments Co.; VISN Management Corp., a for-profit subsidiary of the National Interfaith Cable Coalition; and The DIRECTV Group, Inc.

Source: 2006 Kagan Research

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 19, 2007

**HALLMARK CHANNEL RECEIVES PROMAX SILVER AWARD FOR**  
**"TELL US YOUR STORY" PROGRAMMING INITIATIVE**

Hallmark Channel has won a Promax Silver Award in the Cable Channels & Network Promotional Animation Campaign category for the launch of its "Tell Us Your Story" programming initiative.

The Creative Services team at the network was honored for these humorous and heartwarming stories which have been turned into animated shorts as part of its new, ongoing programming initiative, "Tell Us Your Story." They began running on Hallmark Channel and online at [www.hallmarkchannel.com](http://www.hallmarkchannel.com) in December of 2006. The series was conceived by Marvin Dorson, Senior Vice President, Creative Services and developed by the Creative Services team.

The three animated shorts honored were "The Sean and Kate Love Story," "The Chad and Andrea Love Story" and a "Call To Action." These animated short programs generated thousands of viewer stories, many of which have been turned into animated spots narrated by the real-life person whose story is being told.

Hallmark Channel is currently looking for "Road Trip" and "School Stories" stories from viewers.

The 2007 Promax North America Awards honor the best in marketing and promotion for electronic media in the United States and Canada.

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**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein**Racing Game**

TVG's title sponsorship of the **Breeders' Cup Sprint** (Sat) is both complementary and contrary to net operations, metaphorically speaking. The race is part of American horse racing's most lucrative day—also arguably the 2nd-most famous behind the **KY Derby** card—serving to quickly run up the net's worldwide exposure. "As America's horse racing network, there is nothing better to be associated with," said TVG svp/ GM *David Nathanson* of the BC. "It plays to our audience and brand, and every major [horse racing] country has a stake in it." But that's not to say that Nathanson is racing for the distribution finish line; he knows that slow-and-steady wins the race. The net is currently in 30mln domestic homes and approx 20mln across the pond, with new intl markets under exploration. Current subs have been privy this week to "The Works," the net's most important show all year, said Nathanson. It has been offering since Oct 19 interviews with jockeys and trainers readying for BC races, while the net has been showing pre-race workouts of competing thoroughbreds. This content, however, is perhaps more important to the net: a **Churchill Downs/Magna Ent** partnership prevents TVG from accepting wagers on the KY Derby or Preakness Stakes, so BC programming remains the net's trophy property. Plus, it brings in a ton of money. Speaking of greenbacks, following is a list of BC picks from both Nathanson and myself, of course for entertainment purposes only. Filly/Mare Turf: Nashoba's Key (DN), Lahudood (me); Sprint: Greg's Gold (DN), Idiot Proof (me); Mile: No Biz Like Shobiz (DN), Excellent Art (me); Distaff: Hysterical Lady (DN), Lear's Princess (me); Turf: Dylan Thomas (both); Classic: Any Given Saturday (DN), Lawyer Ron (me). Apoplexy-inducing long-shot: Remarkable News (DN), Precious Kitten (me). Good Luck. **CH**.

**Highlights:** "Nip/Tuck," season premiere, Tues, 10pm, **FX**. Cable's favorite cut-ups are back, but their move from Miami to Hollywood is looking as bad as a botched nose job. In the cutthroat world of Hollywood plastic surgery, Drs McNamara and Troy, who were big fish in Miami (and had a great fish tank), are tiny. That changes when they become medical advisors to, of all things, a TV drama about plastic surgery. The hilarity of a show within a show is a good stunt. Will it and a basketball hoop (you'll see) be enough to give Nip/Tuck the jolt it needs for a healthy fifth season? -- "Almost Human with Jane Goodall," Sun, 8pm, **Animal Planet**. Our biggest misconception about animals, says *Jane Goodall*, is that we don't realize they have personalities. This terrific ape tale insures viewers won't repeat that mistake. **SA**

**Worth a Look:** "Runnin' Down a Dream: Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers," Mon, 7pm, **Sundance**. This doc about Petty from *Peter Bogdanovich* (commissioned by Petty) is must-see for fans, loaded with treasures. For others able to hang for 4 hours, it's very good rockumentary, with a detailed and compelling telling of the Petty saga by Petty and band members. [More reviews, including **WGN**'s "Munsters" marathon & **MoJo**'s "Test Drive," Fri pm at [cable360.net](http://cable360.net).] **SA**

**Basic Cable Rankings**  
(10/15/07-10/26/07)

Mon-Sun Prime			
1	ESPN	2.3	2244
1	DSNY	2.3	2193
3	USA	2.2	2115
4	TBSC	1.5	1409
5	TNT	1.4	1303
6	FOXN	1.2	1157
6	NAN	1.2	1125
8	TOON	1.1	1059
8	HALL	1.1	909
10	LIFE	0.9	915
10	HGTV	0.9	892
10	CORT	0.9	859
10	SPK	0.9	848
10	MTV	0.9	846
10	A&E	0.9	825
10	BET	0.9	745
17	FX	0.8	778
17	SCIF	0.8	773
17	CMDY	0.8	765
17	FAM	0.8	760
17	HIST	0.8	747
17	AMC	0.8	729
17	LMN	0.8	440
24	DISC	0.7	724
24	TLC	0.7	713
24	TVLD	0.7	698
24	VH1	0.7	658
28	FOOD	0.6	618
28	CNN	0.6	571
30	EN	0.5	428
30	NGC	0.5	308
32	APL	0.4	406
32	MSNB	0.4	377
32	ESP2	0.4	370
32	TTC	0.4	336
32	WGNC	0.4	294
32	TDSN	0.4	258
32	SOAP	0.4	258
39	BRAV	0.3	306
39	HLN	0.3	305
39	CMT	0.3	273
39	OXYG	0.3	219
39	DHLT	0.3	189
39	GSN	0.3	173
39	BIO	0.3	126

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

1/2/71

**CABLE GET READY...****CABLE(360)NET****A NEW WEBINAR SERIES ABOUT MONETIZING CHANGE IN CABLE!****First Topic: Smart Bandwidth Management**

What cable operators do with bandwidth determines where they will stand in the triple-quad play sweepstakes. What's the smartest way to compete with satellite and telco players?

Join **Dallas Clement** of Cox Communications, **Catherine Rasenberger** of Rasenberger Media and **Paul Maxwell** of CableFAX, CableWorld, The BRIDGE, for this 90-minute Webinar.

Pricing: Webinar Access \$295.00 USD

**October 30, 2007**

10 am PST, 1pm EST, 6pm GMT

Visit

**Cable360.net/webinars**  
and **Register Now!**

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Complex Machinery

The common athletic extolment to "feed the machine"—to ingest the nutrients that best lead to physical prowess—is at once clichéd and compelling. At the mantra's core lies the mind-boggling interdependence among the human body's systems and processes. **Nat Geo's** "Incredible Human Machine" (Sun, 8pm) delves into this amazing splendor yet applies it to everyone through a focus on normal bodily functions (some atypical as well). But as is Nat Geo's fascinating wont, the special also incorporates spicy real-life examples—including current scientific and medicinal trends—to increase salience.

True, some of the facts require little adornment: one-third of the brain is used to power vision; 45 miles of nerves inhabit the body; a person takes 20K breaths/day. But often it's much easier to sing the body's praises with augmentative data and, in this case, a cameo by rocker *Steven Tyler*. No doubt the Aerosmith front man's silently cursed by his own larynx for the years of exerted stress. Enter *Dr Steven Zeitels*, a noted Boston laryngologist who has performed breakthrough laser surgery on Tyler's voice box, a particular apparatus he also studies to gather helpful information. "We use extremes to determine how people function normally," said Zeitels, referencing imagery of Tyler's vocal chords that was recorded at a recent concert, during which said chords collided approx 780K times. Still, the underlying timbre remains interdependence. "Singing is a brain task and the larynx is the end point," said Zeitels. The incredible human command center is also covered in the special, which spotlights the 3lb mass using amazing techniques and interesting hypotheses. For example, why are Buddhist monks so covetously contented, and how does their meditation train blitheness in the brain. They must feed on positive thoughts, additional nourishment for the human machine. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Does Your Soul Have a Cold?" Mon, 9pm ET, 10 PT, **IFC**. As few as 7 years ago, clinical depression didn't exist in Japan. Certainly people suffered from it, but it wasn't acknowledged. That changed for some in 2000 when American pharmaceutical company Glaxo Smith Kline started selling anti-depression pills in Japan, and built Web sites to educate the public and sell its product. Regardless of the history, this doc is one of the best looks inside the minds of the depressed, with fabulous views of modern Japan. -- "A Summer in the Cage," Mon, 9pm, **Sundance**. In films, stories sometimes compete for dominance. In this doc, the filmmaker's idea to do a project about street basketball in NYC is hijacked when one of the ballplayers volunteers to work on the piece with him. The ballplayer, *Sam Murchison*, seems to have everything—he's huge on the court, handsome, well educated and working on Wall St. Eventually, though, his behavior becomes erratic, leading the film to its new course: a 6-year, often-chilling saga about Sam's battle with bipolar disorder. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Matters of Love & Dating," Mon, 9pm, **Lifetime**. A good return to the small screen for *Ricki Lake*, who mixes pathos and humor in a tale of a 30-something woman with breast cancer. [More reviews, including **History's** "Stalking Jihad," Fri pm at cable360.net] *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

(10/08/07-10/14/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TBSC	2.8	2642
2	DSNY	2.6	2457
3	ESPN	2.5	2459
4	USA	2	1912
5	TNT	1.5	1409
6	LIFE	1.1	1066
6	TOON	1.1	1051
6	FOXN	1.1	1040
6	HALL	1.1	912
10	NAN	1	978
10	CORT	1	923
12	A&E	0.9	876
12	HGTV	0.9	859
12	SPK	0.9	858
12	HIST	0.9	822
16	CMDY	0.8	804
16	SCIF	0.8	759
16	MTV	0.8	731
19	FX	0.7	703
19	VH1	0.7	693
19	TLC	0.7	687
19	TVLD	0.7	668
19	FAM	0.7	653
19	AMC	0.7	644
19	LMN	0.7	403
26	DISC	0.6	626
26	CNN	0.6	538
28	ESP2	0.5	529
28	FOOD	0.5	521
28	BET	0.5	434
28	MSNB	0.5	419
32	APL	0.4	404
32	EN	0.4	394
32	BRAV	0.4	327
32	NGC	0.4	273
32	SOAP	0.4	252
37	TTC	0.3	312
37	HLN	0.3	307
37	OXYG	0.3	241
37	WGNC	0.3	229
37	TDSN	0.3	227
37	CMT	0.3	226
37	VS	0.3	223
37	GSN	0.3	166
37	DTMS	0.3	127
37	BIO	0.3	121

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

## CABLE GET READY...

CABLE 360 NET

### A NEW WEBINAR SERIES ABOUT MONETIZING CHANGE IN CABLE!

#### First Topic: Smart Bandwidth Management

What cable operators do with bandwidth determines where they will stand in the triple-quad play sweepstakes. What's the smartest way to compete with satellite and telco players?

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Visit

Cable360.net/webinars  
and Register Now!

October 30, 2007

10 am PST, 1am EST, 6pm GMT

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Content Control

I just can't get what I need at FedEx Field—and it's really only 2 things. For years, I would watch my franchise flounder while in-stadium receipt of salient league updates would act as a much-needed salve. If my fantasy team was cranking, then the usual burgundy-and-gold blowups seemed less psychically destructive. Yet now, as I'm blessed with early-season success of my Skins, even the most rudimentary information from concurrent games is harder to find than a \$3 beer. Even scores aren't displayed any longer! What's this have to do with programmers, you ask? Well, I'll despondently tell you: my plight is related to that of fans who can't receive certain sports programming because of highly-publicized carriage standoffs between **Comcast** and **Big Ten Network**, for example. In Landover, MD, however, **DirectTV** and **Sprint** are the likely culprits depriving me of what I want unless I use their services/meet their demands. You see, DirectTV offers its "NFL Sunday Ticket" package at the stadium through a rented handheld device, and it offers up-to-date info and virtually any player stat you can imagine. But it runs \$25/game or \$150 for 8 games. Meanwhile, Sprint is 1 of the NFL's major sponsors and offers league content and stats to certain mobile phone subscribers. But I'm not a Sprint customer. And if you think that 1 or both of these conspirators didn't ask Redskins owner *Danny Snyder* to sack scores and highlights in order to ensnare more business, you're crazy! Interestingly, the Redskins and DirectTV didn't respond to this very question. Of course, my lamentations serve to indirectly espouse cable's tiering retort to lofty sports programming fees. If I wanted the game data badly enough, I would get a Sprint phone or pay DirectTV its asking price, right? Maybe, but who would be affected by free scores and highlights? No fans would. I can guarantee you that! CH

**Worth a Look:** "The Gathering," Sat (pt 1) & Sun (pt 2), 9pm, **Lifetime**. The network for women wants to scare viewers this weekend. Mission accomplished with this film. Despite what you thought, a coven of witches runs NYC, and everyone's involved: your kids, their friends, teachers (one of whom is played with appropriate creepiness by *Jamie-Lynn Sigler*), the police, a real estate mogul, even a local pol running for mayor. The biggest shock, for Lifetime viewers, will be that the lead character is a guy (played by *Peter Gallagher*). Even stranger, he's nice. -- "Titanic's Tragic Sister," 9pm, Sun, **History**. Why did Titanic's better fortified younger sis sink in a fast 55 minutes? (That's the only thing moving fast in this slow telling of an interesting story). The key may be in the boiler rooms, a team from History believes. But the surging Aegean and the darkness of the ship 400 feet below make wreck dives dicey. -- "Keeping Up With the Kardashians," Sun, 10:30pm, **E!** It's a pleasure when a celeb reality series we were dreading is more than mildly entertaining. That's true here, due to excellent editing and music, giving Kardashians a scripted feel like "Curb Your Enthusiasm," with *Bruce Jenner* making like *Larry David*, sort of. [Reviews of shows from **Nat Geo**, **Disney** and **MoJo** Fri pm at [cable360.net](http://cable360.net)]. SA

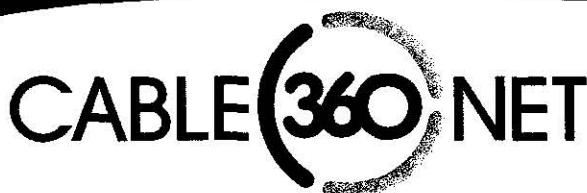
### Basic Cable Rankings

(10/01/07-10/07/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TBSC	4	3886
2	ESPN	2.2	2122
3	DSNY	2.1	2028
4	USA	1.9	1859
5	TNT	1.2	1205
5	FOXN	1.2	1113
5	HALL	1.2	1007
8	LIFE	1.1	1101
8	TOON	1.1	1051
10	NAN	1	985
11	HGTV	0.9	844
11	CORT	0.9	837
11	A&E	0.9	823
11	SPK	0.9	820
15	CMDY	0.8	805
15	MTV	0.8	805
15	SCIF	0.8	788
15	FX	0.8	725
19	HIST	0.7	712
19	VH1	0.7	694
19	DISC	0.7	682
19	AMC	0.7	682
19	TVLD	0.7	642
19	LMN	0.7	402
25	FAM	0.6	619
25	TLC	0.6	581
25	FOOD	0.6	563
25	CNN	0.6	551
25	BET	0.6	519
30	ESP2	0.5	503
30	BRAV	0.5	406
32	APL	0.4	420
32	EN	0.4	412
32	MSNB	0.4	377
32	TTC	0.4	339
32	TDSN	0.4	291
32	NGC	0.4	253
38	HLN	0.3	332
38	OXYG	0.3	252
38	CMT	0.3	245
38	WGNC	0.3	226
38	SOAP	0.3	223
38	VS	0.3	218
38	DHLT	0.3	194
38	WE	0.3	172
38	GSN	0.3	168

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney



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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Performance Art

Let's call it millennial levitism, a new linear art form using humor to accompany content focused on cultural arts. And as the **Smithsonian Channel** employs it within 1 of its flagship programs, so to does **Ovation TV** with "Art & the City" (Sun, 8-9pm), the net's 1st original series. For the record, I find the marriage unnecessary and somewhat annoying—even a tad contrived. But Ovation svp, programming and production *Kris Slava* views it as a zeitgeist. "Humor triggers reactions we can all understand and speaks to the 21st century vibe," he said. "The definition of art has changed so much that a canonical treatment" of art and culture doesn't work anymore. Despite show host *David Keeps'* silliness, the *LA Times* staffer does possess an additive knowledge of artistic pursuits, a slew of which are featured in half-hour blocks. Traveling to cities such as Chicago, Paris and New Orleans, "Art & the City" tours famous museums, galleries, and neighborhoods, spotlights architecture, and also visits with local artists. It's the latter thrust that Ovation believes will lead to differentiation. The exposition of city-specific history, themes and people allows the series to "hook into how people actually consume art themselves... and allows us to tap into localism," said Slava. To this end, viewers are invited to submit user-generated content about defining art in their own locale, and some will be featured within net interstitials. Also, Ovation continues to search for cultural partners to meld on-air events with localized affairs, and is working on forging bonds with major museums across the country. Artistic films will soon take up residence on Sat nights, adding to genre-themed nights throughout the week, including performances and cultural music. "Our programming is very eclectic and very broad, just like classical art," said Slava. And like it or not, certain content even strives to elicit broad smiles from viewers—high-brow, hipster or neophyte. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Koppel on Discovery: Breaking Point," Sun, 9pm, **Discovery**. It's ironic that in prison, where everyone is a number, this doc about CA's overcrowded prison system features some startling numbers. It costs the Golden State \$43K to maintain a prisoner for a year. And, in five years CA's prison budget will top spending for its public colleges and universities. Heard enough? — "Dear Talula," Tues, 7:30pm, **Cinemax**. This 34-min portrait of a young mother with breast cancer is not only a gripping story it's a good piece of filmmaking—by the young mother herself. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Baisden After Dark," Sun, 10pm ET, **TV One**. If you know urban radio talent *Michael Baisden*, you know what to expect—an adult-themed show. What we took away from two mildly entertaining eps we saw is that men and women, regardless of race, have contrasting views about sex. -- "Peglegs of Stuyvesant High," Sun, 6:30pm ET, **CSTV**. They say NYC is a melting pot. Nowhere more so than at Stuyvesant HS, one of the city's most academic public schools. Its formerly hapless football team, profiled here in a mix of seriousness and fun, boasts a slew of first-gen Americans who'd never played football before coming to Stuyvesant. [More, including ESPN's "Jonestown: The Game of their Lives," at [cable360.net](http://cable360.net)]. *SA*

## Basic Cable Rankings

(09/24/07-9/30/07)

### Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2.4	2262
2	ESPN	2.3	2204
3	USA	1.8	1777
4	TBSC	1.5	1416
5	TNT	1.3	1227
6	FOXN	1.1	1083
6	LIFE	1.1	1065
8	TOON	1	957
9	NAN	0.9	874
9	ESP2	0.9	854
9	CORT	0.9	828
9	A&E	0.9	819
9	TVLD	0.9	816
9	HALL	0.9	737
15	HGTV	0.8	810
15	SPK	0.8	802
15	DISC	0.8	774
15	MTV	0.8	772
15	FX	0.8	767
15	SCIF	0.8	751
15	CMDY	0.8	716
22	AMC	0.7	699
22	TLC	0.7	658
22	FAM	0.7	640
25	VH1	0.6	615
25	HIST	0.6	614
25	CNN	0.6	539
25	BET	0.6	484
25	LMN	0.6	357
30	MSNB	0.5	463
30	FOOD	0.5	461
30	BRAV	0.5	407
33	EN	0.4	381
33	APL	0.4	376
33	TTC	0.4	326
33	TDSN	0.4	235
37	HLN	0.3	316
37	NGC	0.3	222
37	SOAP	0.3	208
37	WGNC	0.3	183
37	NKTN	0.3	130
42	CMT	0.2	201
42	OXYG	0.2	183
42	TVGN	0.2	183
42	TWC	0.2	174
42	DHLT	0.2	161

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney



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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

### ArtiFacts and Famous Figures

Growing up in D.C., I have always been enchanted by the Smithsonian Institution—the staggering breadth of artifacts (136mln), the diffuse collections (airplanes to portraits), the wonderment. Now the **Smithsonian Channel** gladly brings it to your family room in HD splendor. Just unearthed on **DirectTV** and searching for other carriage deals, the network obviously doesn't face a dearth of programming fodder (would it surprise anyone if the Museum of American History owned actual fodder used to satisfy the famous Mr. Ed?). The trick must lie in deciding just what to feature. Net evp, programming *David Royle* acknowledges the staggering scope of noteworthy relics, and says it will help the channel differentiate itself from the likes of **The History Channel**, **Nat Geo** and **The Science Channel**. "We have something huge here... one of the most family-friendly brands and content that is entertaining, informative and inspiring," said Royle. "Our audience really wants quality and will expect a bigger range of content [than offered by others]." Royle has been hunting the world over for suitable projects, even forging partnerships with the **BBC** and outfits in Austria, Germany and Japan. "We have an excellent opportunity to reach a very broad family audience," said Royle. Extension will begin with signature series "Tales from the Vaults," featuring actor *Tom Cavanagh* exploring sciences such as taxidermy and famous institution donators including *Theodore Roosevelt* and *Phyllis Diller*. Amid Cavanagh's mixture of additive and sometimes cloying humor, the series really offers a behind-the-scenes tour for which no entry ticket exists. *Morgan Freeman* will host another show, "Sound Revolution," which explores the origins of music with performances by *Eric Clapton* and *B.B. King*. The stage is set for the Smithsonian Channel, and the platform is jamming. CH

**Highlights:** "Dexter," season 2 premiere, Sun, 9pm, **Showtime**. Any way you slice it, this wickedly good series' sophomore season about the Robin Hood of serial killers will be a cut above its strong rookie year. Unlike season one, Dexter's life is bumpy. He's gone cold turkey, not killing for more than 30 days. (How much can our hero endure?) And wouldn't you know it, when Dexter returns to the circuit, he's rusty on his first few kills. Plus, his meticulous knife work (he slices his victims into easy-to-move pieces) no longer holds water. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Brotherhood," season 2 premiere, Sun, 10pm, **Showtime**. Unlike "Dexter" (above), "Brotherhood" starts slowly and changes its focus a bit. While the brothers Caffee—one an ostensibly upstanding state rep, the other a thug—remain key, eps 1-4 focus on detective Declan Giggs (*Ethan Embry*), who grabs every downward-spiral cliché (drinking, drugs, prostitution, marital troubles, failing at work). Declan symbolizes the misery in Brotherhood's excellent portrayal of a dark, dank, decaying Providence, RI. — "Epic Conditions," Mon, 7 & 11pm ET, **Weather HD**. This love poem to the Lake Tahoe Sierra Nevada region will have *SkiTAM's Steve Raymond* and our *Paul Maxwell* salivating, as weather takes a back seat to *Warren Miller's* great HD footage of the best snow skiing. [More, including "Queer Eye's" finale, Fri afternoon at [cable360.net](http://cable360.net)] SA

### Basic Cable Rankings (9/17/07-9/23/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	ESPN	2.6	2486
2	DSNY	2.3	2147
3	USA	2.1	2061
4	TNT	1.7	1670
5	TBSC	1.5	1447
6	LIFE	1.2	1145
6	FOXN	1.2	1135
8	TOON	1.1	1075
9	SPK	1	997
9	HGTV	1	963
9	CORT	1	932
9	A&E	1	928
9	NAN	1	922
9	FX	1	897
9	HALL	1	853
16	CMDY	0.9	885
16	SCIF	0.9	879
16	DISC	0.9	871
16	HIST	0.9	830
20	MTV	0.8	790
20	TVLD	0.8	750
20	CNN	0.8	729
20	FAM	0.8	724
20	LMN	0.8	436
25	TLC	0.7	715
25	AMC	0.7	702
25	ESP2	0.7	652
28	VH1	0.6	612
29	FOOD	0.5	513
29	BRAV	0.5	484
29	BET	0.5	429
29	EN	0.5	418
33	APL	0.4	387
33	MSNB	0.4	376
33	TTC	0.4	354
33	SOAP	0.4	275
33	NGC	0.4	249
33	TDSN	0.4	239
39	HLN	0.3	324
39	CMT	0.3	277
39	WGNC	0.3	233
39	OXYG	0.3	214
39	TVGN	0.3	212
39	SPD	0.3	190
39	GSN	0.3	175
39	DHLT	0.3	171

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Serial Killing

Little more than basic cable flows to my abode, so I wasn't among the myriad fans and beguiled critics of last year's premier season of **Showtime's** "Dexter." I had heard the buzz, of course, which included 3 **Emmy** nods and inclusion on **AFI's** list of the 10 best '06 US TV series. So when my brother-in-law mentioned that the series has replaced "The Sopranos" as his premium show of choice, I decided to join the party for season 2 (Sept 30, 9pm). And now, even somewhat handicapped by a lack of series knowledge, I'm officially now on the fan ledger. "The whole thing of 'Dexter' is in the nuance of his view of life," said exec prod *John Goldwyn*. Indeed, the titular character's stream of consciousness as voice over not only allows viewers to creep closer to a perverse yet empathetic psyche, but also offers the oddly pleasurable receipt of true insider information not afforded the show's unsuspecting (save for 1) characters. And *Michael C. Hall* is superb in his portrayal of Dexter. "The challenge for the second season is to involve the audience even more," said exec prod *Sara Colleton*. Already included within the season's initial eps—and complementing a passel of death and dismemberment—is a vexing "little" problem for Dexter, a life-threatening discovery and the arrival of a formidable foil. Other new compelling characters join the fantastic existing cast, who struggle with new problems and lingering old ones. This is a character-driven series with a decidedly grisly, lurid and novel underpinning. All these facets congealed like caked blood to make the show "destination TV" in '06, said Goldwyn. It generated higher average weekly tune-in levels last year than any other Showtime original, and its season 1 finale garnered 79% more viewing than the premiere. Now those are results to kill for. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Little Rock Central: 50 Years Later," Tues, 8pm, **HBO**. A raw piece from the *Renaud* brothers, makers of the excellent **Discovery Times** series "Off to War." This is just as cutting. It examines what's changed, what hasn't and why at a school that was at the center of desegregation in '57. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "South of Nowhere," Fri, 8pm, **The N**. Just when we begin to think this usually strong teen drama about personal and sexual awakening literally is heading south of nowhere, its writers add an interesting twist or two. In the mid-season finale, we find Kyla (*Eileen Boylan*) developing a strong predilection for nose candy and her sleazy, older manager. Meanwhile Spencer (*Gabrielle Christian*) receives help from best friend Ashley (*Mandy Musgrave*), who convinces Spencer's mom (*Maeve Quinlan*) to attend the Gay Price parade. In gratitude, Spencer shows up later at Ashley's donning a raincoat and little else. Isn't this the way your teens do things? -- "Ultimate Force," Tues, 9pm, **BBC America**. Your subs have seen this type of show many times before—special military forces, using the latest high-tech gadgets, risking life and limb to keep humanity safe, for at least one more week. Still, the Brits do this sort of thing brilliantly. [More reviews including **HBO's** "D.L. Hughley: Unapologetic," Fri afternoon at cable360.net]. *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

(9/10/07-9/16/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	ESPN	3.2	3119
2	USA	2.3	2162
3	TNT	2.1	2032
3	DSNY	2.1	1998
5	LIFE	1.3	1231
5	FOXN	1.3	1206
5	TBSC	1.3	1198
5	HGTV	1.3	1194
9	FX	1.2	1084
10	TOON	1.1	1067
10	A&E	1.1	1012
10	CORT	1.1	978
10	HALL	1.1	923
14	NAN	1	967
14	SPK	1	960
14	SCIF	1	948
14	DISC	1	926
18	HIST	0.9	866
18	AMC	0.9	802
20	MTV	0.8	800
20	VH1	0.8	768
20	CMDY	0.8	739
20	LMN	0.8	447
24	FAM	0.7	698
24	TVLD	0.7	683
24	TLC	0.7	681
27	CNN	0.6	620
27	ESP2	0.6	613
27	FOOD	0.6	587
27	BRAV	0.6	555
27	BET	0.6	483
32	MSNB	0.5	502
32	EN	0.5	450
32	APL	0.5	443
32	SOAP	0.5	300
36	HLN	0.4	361
36	TTC	0.4	347
36	NGC	0.4	297
36	TDSN	0.4	277
40	CMT	0.3	279
40	WGNC	0.3	245
40	OXYG	0.3	224
40	DHLT	0.3	197
40	DTMS	0.3	143
40	BIO	0.3	142
40	GALA	0.3	139

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney



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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Veracious Vittles

Eating like an ape is beneficial, and excessive sugar does not spur hyperactivity in kids. These are just a couple of the helpful and often shocking facts revealed in **Discovery Health's** 6-part series "The Truth About Food" (Mon, 8pm). Produced in partnership with the **BBC**, this entertaining and informative series does a fabulous job of translating invaluable health data—which alone would be dry and bland—into a surprisingly enjoyable content dish. Flavorful results are achieved mainly by mixing compelling human elements with humor and mild irreverence. How many other shows feature a pair of ranchers (1 male, 1 female) equipped with "fat bags" to measure expelled gas over a 24-hour period? For the record, both ate beans on the range and the male emitted slightly more, an amount that would fill 1 balloon. "This is a landmark series for us," said net evp/GM *Carole Tomko*, adding that it gels perfectly with the net's mission to provide "great stories, great personalities and great experts." Myths about foods and healthy lifestyles (and sometimes bodily functions) are tested through experiments using human volunteers. For example, in testing the effect of sugar consumption on children the show staged 2 parties, one without served sugar and a clown as entertainment and one at which many kids ingested what amounted to 47 sugar cubes, but sans Bozo. Turns out the children were more amped up by balloon animals and such than from sugar. Of course, the results don't condone treating your kids to a dinner of Skittles and S'mores, although chances are the physiological changes caused by the sweets can be found somewhere among the Discovery Health platforms. Who knew eating—or learning what not to eat—could be this much fun? *CH*

**Highlights:** "Inside the Actors Studio: *Charlie Sheen*," Mon, 8pm, **Bravo**. Ostensibly it looks like another ratings draw—popular but unaccomplished TV actor grabs eyeballs. But *James Lipton* quickly points out Sheen's impressive body of film work, which began in earnest some 23 years ago with a devilish turn in "Ferris Bueller's Day Off" and capped not much later with Oliver Stone's "Platoon" and "Wall Street." And Sheen's a good raconteur and able to laugh at himself. — "Weeds," Mon, 10pm, **Showtime**. This is the long-awaited ep where *Mary-Kate Olsen* debuts as a member of the God squad with some interesting interpretations of the gospel. Your subs will have to wait 20 mins for Mary-Kate, but her work will renew their faith in once-talented youth-stars making comebacks. Oh, Britney. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "The Lodge," Wed, 7:30pm, **The Sportsman Channel**. Look, **ESPN's** made a living showing highlights, so why not have a show that re-plays the week's best of the hunting and fishing channel? Of course host Brenda and her bare-midriff add something that **ESPN's** nattily attired anchors don't. — "Flow & Tell," Tues, 4pm, **SiTV**. With Hispanic Heritage Month beginning Sat, **SiTV's** "Flow & Tell" series celebrates with a strong ep, as youths discuss the ups and downs of Latino life. The talk is set over English and Spanish-language music vids. [More reviews at [cable360.net](http://cable360.net)] *SA*

## Basic Cable Rankings

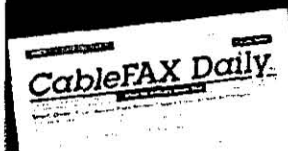
(9/03/07-9/09/07)

### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.2	2076
1	DSNY	2.2	2039
3	USA	2.1	2011
4	ESPN	2	1883
5	MTV	1.4	1356
6	LIFE	1.3	1284
6	HGTV	1.3	1247
6	SPK	1.3	1216
6	FOXN	1.3	1215
10	TBSC	1.2	1133
10	TOON	1.2	1133
10	HALL	1.2	983
13	A&E	1.1	1096
13	CORT	1.1	972
15	NAN	1	996
15	FX	1	928
17	DISC	0.9	883
17	AMC	0.9	846
17	SCIF	0.9	817
17	ESP2	0.9	816
17	LMN	0.9	512
22	TLC	0.8	773
22	FAM	0.8	769
22	HIST	0.8	760
22	CMDY	0.8	735
26	TVLD	0.7	642
26	FOOD	0.7	627
28	VH1	0.6	612
28	CNN	0.6	610
28	BRAV	0.6	559
28	CMT	0.6	507
28	BET	0.6	506
33	MSNB	0.5	461
33	EN	0.5	458
33	APL	0.5	451
33	NGC	0.5	332
37	TTC	0.4	341
37	TDSN	0.4	275
37	OXYG	0.4	265
37	SOAP	0.4	258
41	HLN	0.3	322
41	VS	0.3	240
41	WGNC	0.3	233
41	DHLT	0.3	195
41	WE	0.3	193
41	DTMS	0.3	133

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

### Out of the Closet

If you don't know quite what to make of *R. Kelly's* "Trapped in the Closet" or what to call it, IFC GM *Evan Shapiro* has got you covered. "It's equal parts brilliance and insanity," he said of the online project that really defies genre classification. "It seemed like the perfect fit [for] our mission to turn IFC.com into a broadband programming channel of its own." Included are myriad characters—some humorous, some stereotypical, most both—confronting issues such as infidelity, homosexuality and violence. But here's the rub: Kelly mellifluously sings (and occasionally speaks) all of the genuine and witty dialogue, and the 1-8min eps add up to a delectable urban treat. Shapiro scooped up the rights to the hip-hopera/urban narrative/soulful saga earlier this year, confident that it would become a "cult hit." Yet there's no way he could've foreseen the elaborate sensation it has become. IFC.com opened the door Aug 6 to eps 1-13 (1st conceived in '05), and then unfurled 10 more eps and a related special Aug 13-23. During this period, "Trapped" helped the site's page views jump 675% Y-over-Y to 4.11mln and daily uniques soar more than 1000% to 1.16mln. The entire piece airs Fri (9pm) on the net along with a Kelly interview. Success stemmed from a "perfect storm" of important factors, said Shapiro. "The blogs went... nuts, which made it more relevant, which drove more traffic to the site, which led to more writing," he said. "This is really the first online hit series in the industry." More series eps are forthcoming, as are myriad projects to run across TV, the Web and VOD, which the net hopes to launch within a year. The underpinning goal is to "create programs that live on all 3," said Shapiro. Indeed, it would be a shame if a projects like Kelly's were 'trapped' on just one. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Torchwood," Sat, 9pm, **BBC America**. The good word's been out on this "Dr Who" extension for months among the sci fi crazies who just couldn't wait—they watched pirated copies made in Britain. They're right. This is one of the most compelling and funny sci fi pilots we've seen. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Tell Me You Love Me," Sun, 9pm, **HBO**. Sex, sex, sex. That's all anyone will talk about after watching the premiere of this 10-part drama. While the sex is as explicit as anything HBO's ever done (soft core porn excepted), hopefully your subs will see beyond the copulation—although there's at least one such scene in 9 of the 10 episodes. If they do, they'll find a well-done, albeit slow-moving series about 4 couples in various stages of love. More likely, this will inflame K Mart and the a la carters. *SA*

**Libraries Live:** "Presidential Libraries," Fri, 8 & 11pm ET, **C-SPAN**. We've seen only clips from this live series that visits one of the 12 presidential libraries every Fri night (starting with Hoover and ending with Clinton), but plans to sleuth (opening off-limits archives) on live TV sounds great. *SA* [More reviews, including HBO's "Alive Day Memories" & "Curb Your Enthusiasm" Fri pm at cable360.net]

### Basic Cable Rankings

(8/27/07-9/02/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.3	2204
1	ESPN	2.3	2198
1	DSNY	2.3	2126
4	TBSC	1.6	1528
5	NAN	1.2	1158
5	HALL	1.2	996
7	LIFE	1.1	1084
7	HGTV	1.1	1065
7	USA	1.1	1051
7	TOON	1.1	1014
7	SCIF	1.1	1005
7	CORT	1.1	960
13	A&E	1	985
13	DISC	1	934
13	SPK	1	915
13	FAM	1	912
13	FX	1	910
18	FOXN	0.9	886
18	MTV	0.9	885
20	AMC	0.8	739
20	LMN	0.8	464
22	TLC	0.7	715
22	ESP2	0.7	707
22	HIST	0.7	706
22	CMDY	0.7	698
22	VH1	0.7	657
22	FOOD	0.7	656
22	TVLD	0.7	618
29	CNN	0.6	559
29	BET	0.6	506
31	EN	0.5	476
31	BRAV	0.5	457
31	MSNB	0.5	424
34	APL	0.4	401
34	TTC	0.4	368
34	SOAP	0.4	293
34	WGN	0.4	279
34	OXYG	0.4	263
34	NGC	0.4	251
34	TDSN	0.4	239
34	NFLN	0.4	193
42	HLN	0.3	327
42	CMT	0.3	295
42	WE	0.3	221
42	DHLT	0.3	186
42	BIO	0.3	127

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Living With Life

Returning a stacked billfold to its rightful owner doesn't constitute true strength of character. Neither does a public figure, preemptive to discovery, exhibiting contrition for impropriety. And certainly my admission of an inability to staunch tears while watching HBO's doc "Alive Day Memories: Home From Iraq" (Sept 9, 10:30pm) shouldn't gild my reputation. Perhaps refreshing is an applicable adjective in these situations, but I've rarely witnessed such deeply-affecting character strength as typified by the 10 soldiers featured in HBO's piece. Some perspective: an "Alive Day" memorializes a fateful military date on which a soldier should have—for all intents and purposes—perished in action. The term's recent popularity stems largely from medical advancements that allow roughly 90% of soldiers wounded in Iraq now make it home. Unfortunately, it's a double-edged sword: a record number of amputees also return, as do many with severe emotional stress. Stress? More like distress. One featured soldier witnessed his best buddy cleaved in half by an IED. Another's arm and shoulder were dismembered by an RPG. Still another, while assessing damage after a bomb exploded his Humvee, thought his severed thumb was manageable—only to discover he no longer had legs. Yet all of them continue to manage the best they can, fighting to move on from personal tragedy. "We really tried to show the sorrow in the heartland," said *Sheila Nevins*, pres, HBO Doc Films. "You feel very small in relation to these young people, insignificant." Yet their fortitude, bravery and strength are massive. Interspersed is footage of the soldiers' lives, even insurgent video of several fateful explosions—all extremely powerful. And prod *James Gandolfini*, who speaks with the victims about their experiences, delivers an admirable performance by showing compassion and support, yet still allowing the soldiers' voices to dominate and shine. It's a glare that will be with me always. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Diana: The Witnesses in the Tunnel," Sat, 10:45pm, **Starz**. Hardcore Di fans won't learn much from this excellent timeline doc from England's Channel 4, but everyone else will be riveted. At times dispassionate and emotional, accusatory and balanced, it concludes the paparazzi probably are innocent and that photos confiscated in the tunnel by French police might be illuminating. -- "Hard Knocks," season finale, Wed, 10pm, **HBO**. It seems almost nothing is off limits to cameras during this excellent 5-week mini series inside the training camp of the K.C. Chiefs. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Grand Slam," Sat, 7pm, **GSN**. Even if your subs haven't followed the weekly elimination quiz featuring top-winning game show contestants, they'll enjoy these semis. The favorite is top-ranked *Ken Jennings*, the "Jeopardy" legend, although watch out for #14, "The Weakest Link's" *Michelle Kitt*, who faces him tonight. -- "Tim Gunn's Guide to Style," Thurs, 10pm, **Bravo**. Your subs have seen this sort of make-over show, but never with *Tim Gunn* at the helm. Known for a sane fashion sense from his stint as a mentor on Bravo's "Project Runway," here Gunn provides garments, gifts and emotional solace for fashion-challenged women. And he's so serious. [For more reviews, including **A&E's** "9/11's Toxic Dust," see cable360.net Fri afternoon]. *SA*

## Basic Cable Rankings

(8/20/07-8/26/07)

### Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2.7	2529
2	USA	2.2	2063
3	TNT	2	1931
3	ESPN	2	1849
5	LIFE	1.4	1347
5	TBSC	1.4	1322
7	TOON	1.2	1143
7	HALL	1.2	1008
9	FOXN	1.1	1051
9	HGTV	1.1	1048
9	NAN	1.1	1033
9	CORT	1.1	1017
13	A&E	1	974
13	FX	1	964
13	MTV	1	947
13	SPK	1	933
17	CNN	0.9	875
17	DISC	0.9	870
17	AMC	0.9	788
20	HIST	0.8	780
20	CMDY	0.8	769
20	SCIF	0.8	742
20	TLC	0.8	710
20	LMN	0.8	455
25	FAM	0.7	702
25	TVLD	0.7	672
25	FOOD	0.7	635
28	ESP2	0.6	609
28	VH1	0.6	570
28	BRAV	0.6	537
31	EN	0.5	458
31	BET	0.5	450
31	APL	0.5	428
31	MSNB	0.5	406
35	TTC	0.4	372
35	TWC	0.4	342
35	CMT	0.4	320
35	SOAP	0.4	285
35	OXYG	0.4	271
35	NGC	0.4	270
35	TDSN	0.4	242
42	HLN	0.3	314
42	WGNC	0.3	241
42	WE	0.3	195
42	DHLT	0.3	193
42	NFLN	0.3	144

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST.

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Fantasy Land

My condolences to any fantasy football enthusiast who already took the felonious *Mike Vick* in an early-round. Of course, such drafters should have thought better of such a play, yet it's exactly the unknowns (law-related or otherwise) that comprise the true essence of fantasy football. Unless acquainted with a clairvoyant, no one can foresee how the aging *Brett Favre* will fare this season or if *Clinton Portis* will remain healthy. Accordingly, fantasy footballers scour media for helpful nuggets... or at least consensus on confounding topics. And there's certainly no dearth of features and data across platforms to sate fans' hunger for it all. "We make a concerted effort to hit up fantasy wherever possible," said **ESPN** vp, games *Raphael Poplock*, adding that this important fan base spends more time online than any other (bosses beware!). Like myriad portals, **ESPN.com** has been managing fantasy leagues for a number of years, and this month kicked off a new interactive microsite giving rookies tips on league set-up and play. The sports giant has also amped up fantasy integration across **ESPNEWS** and "SportsCenter." Pigskin gurus such as *Chris Mortensen* and *Steve Young* participated this week in an ESPN special featuring a live league draft and banter about draft strategy. **NFL Net** also caters to the fantasy base, primarily through linear shows such as "Playbook," a Sun morning show featuring game analysis and updated injury information, and "Red Zone," in which the net spews game stats and scoring recaps during the action (Sun, 1-4pm ET). "We like to think all of our programs have fantasy elements," said net comm dir *Seth Palansky*. There are a few elemental aspects to fantasy football as well: stock your roster with RBs; barring injury, never bench your studs and... be discreet with team management functions while working. **CH**

**Highlights:** "Crazy Sexy Cancer," Wed, 9pm, **TLC**. An inspiring odyssey told nicely by 31-year-old unknown actress *Kris Carr*, who was diagnosed with a rare cancer in '03. We hope we'll see this is the kind of quality fare regularly on **TLC**. - "The Road to War: Iraq," Mon, 9pm, **Nat Geo**. *Nat Geo* gives a day-by-day timeline of events leading to the U.S. attack on Iraq in March '03. Covering 18 months in 60 minutes leaves only seconds for commentary from insiders like *Colin Powell* deputy *Dick Armitage*, who gently whacks *Rummy*, while ex-White House chief of staff *Andy Card* gives good insight as he defends his old boss. **SA**

**Worth a Look:** "Pantry Raid," Wed, 9pm, **Style**. Rice Krispies beef cups? Popcorn in clam chowder? Chef *Michael Schulson* is the poster child for 'necessity is the mother of invention (in the kitchen)' as he cooks with whatever he finds in your pantry. (By the way, the Rice Krispies with beef were delicious at **TCA**). - "Army Wives," season 1 finale, Sun, 10pm, **Lifetime**. Considering the ratings it pulled, we can't imagine there'll be many casualties from this cliffhanger, which could be called "I'll Have a Kamikaze." [More reviews, including **TBS'** "World's Funniest Commercials" and **Sundance's** "The Education of Ms Groves," at [cable360.net](http://cable360.net)] **SA**

### Basic Cable Rankings

(8/13/07-8/19/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	4.2	3883
2	USA	2.2	2082
3	TNT	1.8	1703
4	ESPN	1.6	1513
5	TBSC	1.4	1339
6	LIFE	1.3	1246
6	TOON	1.3	1242
6	FOXN	1.3	1163
9	HALL	1.2	1013
10	HGTV	1.1	1038
10	A&E	1.1	992
12	FX	1	933
12	CORT	1	883
14	DISC	0.9	891
14	SPK	0.9	876
14	NAN	0.9	876
14	HIST	0.9	873
14	SCIF	0.9	826
14	MTV	0.9	820
20	CNN	0.8	773
20	AMC	0.8	731
22	CMDY	0.7	690
22	TVLD	0.7	688
22	TLC	0.7	631
22	FAM	0.7	611
26	VH1	0.6	606
26	FOOD	0.6	591
26	BRAV	0.6	507
26	LMN	0.6	344
30	APL	0.5	490
30	MSNB	0.5	458
30	BET	0.5	453
30	ESP2	0.5	440
34	TTC	0.4	390
34	EN	0.4	369
34	TWC	0.4	353
34	SOAP	0.4	289
34	NGC	0.4	283
39	HLN	0.3	311
39	CMT	0.3	287
39	OXYG	0.3	244
39	WGNC	0.3	220
39	TDSN	0.3	220
39	DHLT	0.3	170
39	NKTN	0.3	138
39	BIO	0.3	119

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

## WANT SOME PERSPECTIVE?

# CABLE 360 NET

CABLE360.NET, THE BIG PICTURE NETWORK.

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Casting Stones

Comcast recently launched in beta **Fancast.com**, which includes some questionable show ratings that may rile some programmers. According to the site—perhaps best described as a hybrid TV/film portal that draws from the models of both **TVGuide.com** and **IMBD.com**—TNT's cable stalwart "The Closer" is 'pretty good,' USA's beloved and decorated "Monk" is 'okay' and FX's popular "Rescue Me" is 'bad.' Want more? The likes of **Lifetime's** "Army Wives" and **AMC's** "Mad Men" and "Broken Trail" rank beneath 'dreadful,' and even **HBO's** "The Sopranos" is slighted with a 'so so' rating. Given the various Emmy nods, popularity and/or critical acclaim of these shows, can these ratings be trusted? The underlying problem (yes, it's in beta) is that ratings are assigned as an average of user opinions, precipitating an initial skewing as a mass of people has presumably yet to interact. But given that the site recommends on its home page shows to watch using these ratings and 1 other metric, the problem seems critical to exposure of various content. Also, the site's traffic seems to be initially comprised of a younger-leaning demo, further distorting content ratings. For example, **Nickelodeon's** "SpongeBob SquarePants" and **Disney's** "Hannah Montana" are deemed 'great,' while Disney's "Suite Life of Zack & Cody" rates as 'amazing.' Comcast declined to comment. All this said, the site's concept is cool, features are neat and navigation is fairly simple. Users may search TV listings, personalize a favorites list and easily cross-reference virtually any show, movie or actor. There's plenty of streaming video, too, including the season 3 debut ep of **Showtime's** "Weeds" and a slew of TV and film peeks/trailers. And if you like what you see within some of the trailers, the site offers a search function for local movie times and a ticket purchase option. Pretty sweet, and further sweetening is likely as Fancast will be a key distribution site for **News Corp** and **NBCU's** forthcoming online video venture. Just don't believe everything you read. CH

**Highlights:** "Shakespeare's As You Like It," Tues, 9pm, **HBO**. Shakespeare purists will detest this Japanese-flavored adaptation of one of the Bard's comedies. Everyone else who sees it (true, this is not going to be a lot of people) will revel in its grand production values and the direction of **Kenneth Branagh**, who once again has made Shakespeare accessible.-- "Mad Men," Thurs, 10pm, **AMC**. Infidelity, smoking, sexism and anti-Semitism—weren't the 60s great. Seriously, this is a good week for your subs to join the rush to "Mad Men," and a handy online guide can bring them up to date on missed eps, which are downloadable on iTunes. SA

**Worth a Look:** "God's Warriors," Tues-Thurs, 9pm, **CNN**. Your subscribers know the arguments about [write in your least favorite news organization] being biased when it comes to reporting on the Middle East. Those who wrote in "CNN" will not change their minds after watching this relatively informative 3-night affair that looks at Jewish, Muslim and Christian fundamentalists, and that's partly because of the subject matter. Yet if leaving the viewer with a visceral reaction to what's on the screen equals success, than CNN's been successful. SA

## Basic Cable Rankings (8/06/07-8/12/07)

Mon-Sun Prime			
1	DSNY	2.4	2230
2	USA	2.3	2126
3	TNT	1.9	1772
4	TBSC	1.3	1235
4	HALL	1.3	1071
6	LIFE	1.2	1121
6	TOON	1.2	1114
6	FOXN	1.2	1087
9	HGTV	1.1	1073
9	A&E	1.1	1035
9	CORT	1.1	962
12	NAN	1	971
12	DISC	1	959
12	FX	1	952
12	ESPN	1	918
12	HIST	1	908
17	SPK	0.9	874
17	FAM	0.9	823
17	CMDY	0.9	800
17	SCIF	0.9	790
17	AMC	0.9	789
22	MTV	0.8	764
22	TLC	0.8	724
22	TVLD	0.8	718
25	CNN	0.7	678
25	FOOD	0.7	637
25	LMN	0.7	395
28	BRAV	0.6	514
28	BET	0.6	478
30	VH1	0.5	481
30	ESP2	0.5	455
30	EN	0.5	419
30	APL	0.5	418
30	MSNB	0.5	407
30	SOAP	0.5	296
36	TTC	0.4	348
36	CMT	0.4	311
36	WGNC	0.4	291
36	NGC	0.4	284
36	TDSN	0.4	277
36	NFLN	0.4	154
42	HLN	0.3	304
42	OXYG	0.3	256
42	DHLT	0.3	194
42	WE	0.3	185
42	NKTN	0.3	124

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

## Cable's Hispanic Heritage

It's not an ideal situation for Spanish-themed channels on cable. "There are 400 or so American channels and just 32 Hispanic channels for the fastest-growing sector of the American population," says *Ariela Nerubay*, vp, marketing & sales, **TuTV**. Yet Nerubay and others admit "the consumer is in a better place now [regarding Hispanic offerings] than a few years ago." More reasons for optimism are recent additions of **The History Channel en Espanol** to **Cox San Diego's** Paquete Latino digital tier and to **Cablevision's** **IO espanol** service in NYC and bits of NJ. The timing couldn't be better. Hispanic Heritage Month begins Sept 15 and History Channel en Espanol (26mln HHs) is responding with an initiative fronted by handsome *Carlos Ponce* (Carlos Rivera on "7th Heaven") and featuring a lineup of US Spanish-language premieres designed to highlight the richness of Latino history and current culture. On the rich side is a history of *Don Quixote* (Sept 15, 8pm) that not only examines the man from La Mancha but also discusses how *Cervantes* penned the story. "This is programming that lets viewers flex their intellectual muscles, delight in the richness of their history and hopefully inspires them to delve deeper into it," the channel's programming director *Marlene Braga* says. In contrast to the beautiful Quixote story is "State of Fear" (Sept 18, 8pm), a doc about Peru's murderous Shining Path. These shows are also exemplary of what Braga likes to do on the channel year-round. The US Hispanic experience is "the collision of worlds," she says, marrying Hispanic traditions with American culture. Of course History's HHM initiative is aimed at driving sales of Hispanic tiers, so there are strategic partnerships, like the one that gives customers who sign up for the Spanish tier a 6-month subscription to **People en Espanol**. SA

**Highlights:** "Vietnam Nurses with Dana Delany," tonight, 10 ET, **WE**. Forget Dana (can't believe we said that); the best part are stories of how young women survived Vietnam as military nurses. -- "On Native Soil," Mon, 9pm, **Court TV**. Hard-hitting review of 9/11. -- "Siargate SG-1," ep 200, tonight, 8, **SciFi**. Loyal fans won't miss it, but fun for newbies, too. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Covershot," tonight, 10, **TLC**. Yet another complete makeover show, but supermodel/host *Frederique* eases the pain. -- "Breaking Up with Shannen Doherty," Tues, 10pm, **Oxygen**. The male of the couple Shannen helps break up belongs in the chauvinist hall of fame. -- "Kappa Mikey," Sun, 11am, **Nick**. Love the title, "Lost in Transportation." -- "Mystery Woman: Oh Baby," tomorrow, 9pm, **Hallmark**. Good mystery and ironic since star *Kellie Martin* is preggers herself. -- "Egyptian Book of the Dead," Tues, 8pm **History**. Interesting process story about finding religion's 1st written description. -- "When The Levees Broke," Mon, Tues, 9pm, **HBO**. Definitive and critical look at Katrina from *Spike Lee*. -- "Katrina Anniversary Special," Sun, 8pm, **Weather**. Interesting look at New Orleans today, but very little pure weather content. SA

### Basic Cable Rankings

(8/07/06-8/13/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.4	2185
1	USA	2.4	2152
3	DSNY	2.3	2045
4	LIFE	1.5	1342
5	FOXN	1.4	1284
5	TOON	1.4	1274
7	NAN	1.3	1133
7	HALL	1.3	971
9	TBSC	1.2	1124
9	A&E	1.2	1046
11	ESPN	1.1	978
11	HGTV	1.1	953
13	HIST	1	916
13	SCIF	1	899
13	AMC	1	899
13	CMDY	1	878
17	MTV	0.9	849
17	DISC	0.9	840
17	FAM	0.9	836
17	SPK	0.9	831
17	FX	0.9	793
17	TVLD	0.9	759
23	CNN	0.8	753
23	CORT	0.8	658
25	TLC	0.7	650
25	FOOD	0.7	620
25	LMN	0.7	334
28	VH1	0.6	571
28	BET	0.6	513
28	BRAV	0.6	494
28	APL	0.6	493
28	SOAP	0.6	325
33	EN	0.5	427
33	WGNC	0.5	325
33	OXYG	0.5	320
36	ESP2	0.4	378
36	TTC	0.4	350
36	MSNB	0.4	309
36	CMT	0.4	304
36	NGC	0.4	232
36	GSN	0.4	213
36	BIO	0.4	145
43	HLN	0.3	276
43	TVGC	0.3	236
43	TWC	0.3	232

\*Nelsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Taking No Bull

CMT's 1st celeb reality show kicks out of the chute tonight aboard 1-ton bulls with menacing names like Satan's Own and Bad Company. Yet there's nothing negative about the initial camaraderie among the 9 celebs trying to conquer the dangerous world of bull riding in "Ty Murray's Celebrity Bull Riding Challenge" (9pm). Amassed by the net to compete is a surprising and eclectic group of non-cowboys that includes former NFLer "Rocket" Ismail (who actually was, Dallas variety), Anthony Quinn's son Francesco and 1 of the ubiquitous B-rated Baldwin brothers, Stephen. And, refreshingly, there are no imposed eliminations in this journey to participation in a professional event, so the guys genuinely root for 1 another—albeit mainly to avoid major injury or death. Even so, CMT development chief Bob Kusbit admits that many viewers will be "rooting for the bulls." Indeed, some may treat outspoken rapper and reality show vet Vanilla Ice with derisive chants of "Gored, Gored, Baby!" Alas, no major catastrophes in the debut ep, although allusions are made to a broken bone in the near future. Also particularly compelling is the depiction of the sport's training protocol and the palpable fear as contestants initially strive for an 8-sec ride. Plus, bull riding stalwart Murray is knowledgeable and likable, even bringing songstress Jewel along for cameos. Her involvement satisfies one net goal to feature musicians not only in the country genre, but relevant rockers, too, said Kusbit. Still, the overarching thrust is voluminosity. "It's sort of my mantra, these loud ideas that will have people stand up and take notice," said Kusbit in description of Ty Murray's and future net originals. In the offing is a Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders spin-off, a music competition and a series that involves makeovers, as Kusbit created MTV's "Made." Meanwhile, Leif Garrett and the others are discovering that you can't make a bull do anything expect jump and buck. Enjoy the ride! *CH*

**Highlights:** "Science of Dogs," Wed, 8pm, **Nat Geo**. A great look at how and why dogs were and are manipulated by humans to create just the right canine in what the show calls "a giant eugenics experiment." The species are fascinating, including Russia's Sulimov dogs, bred solely to sniff out explosives. -- "Weeds," Mon, season 3 premiere, 10pm & "Californication," premiere, 10:30pm, **Showtime**. Linear channel schedules may disappear one day, but pairing these series is a beautiful touch. "Weeds" adds complexity as Nancy (Mary-Louise Parker) faces the reality of her profession as a suburban pot peddler. In "Californication," David Duchovny's character ignores reality as he attempts to be Peter Pan. The priceless opening minutes explain it well. Season 3 debut of "Meerkat Manor," 8:30pm, **Animal Planet**. Flower's pups go AWOL as the Whisker family is evicted by the Commandos. The tykes are in peril as predators loom; the Zappa clan must be taken down as the Whiskers seek a new burrow. *SA, SB*

**Worth a Look:** "Diana, Last Days of a Princess," Sun, 8pm, **TLC**. What's gutsy about this pastiche of drama and interviews is that it whacks at Dodi, his dad, the tabloids and paparazzi (of course) and even Diana. [Valerie Bertinelli on **Hallmark**, Mandy Moore on **Oxygen** and more at [cable360.net](http://cable360.net)]. *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

(7/30/07-8/05/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2.4	2202
2	USA	2	1926
3	TNT	1.9	1812
4	FOXN	1.4	1299
5	TBSC	1.3	1217
5	NAN	1.3	1197
5	LIFE	1.3	1186
8	ESPN	1.2	1146
8	FX	1.2	1131
8	HALL	1.2	1021
11	TOON	1.1	1066
11	HGTV	1.1	1037
11	CORT	1.1	954
14	A&E	1	982
14	DISC	1	960
14	FAM	1	941
17	SPK	0.9	863
17	CNN	0.9	833
17	HIST	0.9	812
20	AMC	0.8	779
20	TLC	0.8	709
22	MTV	0.7	700
22	CMDY	0.7	688
22	SCIF	0.7	678
22	LMN	0.7	377
26	FOOD	0.6	590
26	TVLD	0.6	576
26	VH1	0.6	544
26	BET	0.6	490
26	NFLN	0.6	265
31	MSNB	0.5	476
31	APL	0.5	441
31	BRAV	0.5	434
31	EN	0.5	433
31	SOAP	0.5	303
36	ESP2	0.4	415
36	TTC	0.4	399
36	HLN	0.4	374
36	OXYG	0.4	294
36	NGC	0.4	281
41	CMT	0.3	268
41	WGNC	0.3	248
41	TDSN	0.3	222
41	DHLT	0.3	190
41	WE	0.3	173
41	GSN	0.3	161

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Scalping Sports

The US sports landscape has quickly devolved into a maelstrom of immorality, a grating development that serves as a disturbing commentary on American society. And arguably very few persons or industries—cable included—are immune to contributing culpability. Let's look at the most recent litany of actual or alleged transgressions in pro sports, which posed against the backdrop of the recent induction into the **MLB** Hall of Fame of consummate gentlemen *Cal Ripken* and *Tony Gwynn* seems to bask all the more in egregiousness. There's *Mike Vick's* nauseating federal dog fighting charges; *Barry Bonds'* chase for baseball's hallowed homerun record, forever stigmatized by baseball's steroids scandal; the **NBA's** additional suspension doled to league scourge *Ron Artest* and the scandal involving former referee *Tim Donaghy*, who allegedly bet on games for which he officiated; and cycling's massive problem with doping (this year's winner is thought to have cheated, too). Unfortunately, cable programmers are bound by contractual obligations and often can't make a stand, even if they wanted to (think *Versus'* Tour de France coverage); they must be reactively amoral. But did **ESPN** have to pick up extra Giants games, in hopes of airing the record-breaking at-bat? I, for one, would've applauded a decision against it. But it wouldn't have been a prudent decision because most sports fans still turn a blind eye to the problems and continue to tune in (ironically, the sport least in the headlines (**NHL**) garners the smallest viewership). Still, fans' collective shrug can't be the reason problems are bleeding into network/MSO negotiations. **NFL Net** butted heads with MSOs that are now locking horns with the **Big Ten Net**. And don't forget MLB's initial attempt this year to shut out cable (and myriad fans) from its out-of-market games package. Granted, as money-making concerns—many of them public—it's hard to begrudge a profit motive. But at what price? *CH*

**Highlights:** "Jekyll," Sat, 8pm, **BBC America**. Your subs know "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde." So do the characters in this 4-parter, a loosely adapted, modern-day version. The Jekyll-like protagonist (played wonderfully by *John Nesbitt*) knows his alter ego is a dangerous character but feels modern surveillance technology will keep the monster in check. Early on, Dr Jekyll's biggest issue is explaining his extended absences to the wife & kids. And, darn, when Hyde goes out for a night on the town, can't he leave a note for Jekyll as to where he parked the car? *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "The Company," Sun, 8pm, **TNT**. TNT gets points for raising the standard, forgoing obvious subjects for a summer bio pic (*Paris Hilton*, *Tom Cruise* or *Britney Spears*) and instead hanging love stories and other dramas on the shoulders of talented bureaucrats from the CIA's formative years. *Michael Keaton*, *Chris O'Donnell* and good marketing will grab ratings, but this clichéd spy spiel is a drama, not a substitute for history class. — "Fallen," Fri-Sun, 8pm, **ABC F**. After a 1-year wait, we get parts II & III of this sci fi saga. *Paul Wesley* is perfect as a teen angel (literally). Part I reruns Fri. [Reviews of **GSN's** "Grand Slam," **Style's** "Kimora: Life in the Fab Lane" and more at [cable360.net](http://cable360.net)] *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

(7/23/07-7/29/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2.4	2186
2	USA	2.1	2013
3	TNT	2	1875
4	LIFE	1.3	1184
5	FOXN	1.2	1128
5	TBSC	1.2	1119
5	FX	1.2	1099
8	TOON	1.1	1056
8	DISC	1.1	1008
8	HGTV	1.1	983
8	CORT	1.1	940
12	A&E	1	969
12	SPK	1	958
12	NAN	1	939
12	HIST	1	886
12	HALL	1	850
17	FAM	0.9	882
17	AMC	0.9	825
17	MTV	0.9	811
17	SCIF	0.9	791
21	TLC	0.8	764
21	CMDY	0.8	722
23	CNN	0.7	704
23	TVLD	0.7	656
23	FOOD	0.7	641
23	ESPN	0.7	619
27	ESP2	0.6	568
27	VH1	0.6	564
27	BET	0.6	506
27	LMN	0.6	357
31	BRAV	0.5	463
31	MSNB	0.5	454
31	EN 0.5	428	
31	APL	0.5	427
31	SOAP	0.5	293
36	TTC	0.4	390
36	HLN	0.4	353
36	OXYG	0.4	286
36	NGC	0.4	263
36	WGNC	0.4	254
41	CMT	0.3	261
41	TDSN	0.3	221
41	DHLT	0.3	174
41	NOGG	0.3	165
41	BIO	0.3	122
41	TV1	0.3	109

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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**WHAT THE  
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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Pointing to Originals

Bank heists and hostage situations are certainly hackneyed content themes, yet they never seem to lose traction, with most related movies/TV shows stacking viewers like C-notes. Maybe the success stems from the often attendant violence or the various schemes employed by would-be thieves; it could be the sympathy felt for victims or the tactics of law enforcement. Nah! For most people it's got to be the vicarious thrill. Who wouldn't want a chance at hauling away duffel bags full of cold, hard cash? In **Spike's** "The Kill Point" (Sun, 9pm), versatile actor **John Leguizamo**, aka "Mr. Wolf," receives that coveted opportunity only to see it slip away in a flurry of gunfire. That this action transpires barely 5min into the 8-hour original serves notice that the net's initial foray into major scripted content may be anything but trite. "It was developed initially as a 1-hour pilot, but with the strong script and those involved we thought, 'let's just do all 8 hours without a pilot,'" said programming vp **Bill McGoldrick**. "We're really proud of it." Also featuring the solid **Donnie Wahlberg** and directed by **Steve Shill** (**Showtime's** "The Tudors"), Kill will air over 6 weeks after initially shooting out 2 hours—after which I was primed for more. Some character back stories are silly and contrived, as are some prominent personalities, but the main plot is dead on and the sheer number of featured roles guarantees something of appeal. There won't be any edification here, but suffice it to say that the rolling in of a contemporary issue that deeply affects many people may prove to be Kill's golden thread. As for what's in the original scripted store for the net's largely male 18-49 viewership going forward, McGoldrick said to expect half dramas, half comedies, with no real timeline. The idea is to "do fewer, but do them big and bold," he said, adjectives that must also apply to the egos of those who attempt a bank robbery. **CH**

**Highlights:** "Damages," Tues, 10pm, **FX**. **Glenn Close** and **Ted Danson** will get the ink (and hopefully pull in viewers), but the writing team of **Todd & Glenn Kessler** and **Daniel Zelman** deserve a lot of the credit, cooking up a thrilling plot as thick as a juicy steak, and as satisfying. **FX's** "Closer" is so deliciously vicious as a high-powered attorney she merits a spot on **Discovery's** "Shark Week." **SA**

**Worth a Look:** "Saving Grace," Mon, 10pm, **TNT**. Almost all you to know about this new series (and most what you need to see about its lead actor) can be found during the pilot's beginning moments. We find **Holly Hunter** (Grace) bed wrestling with a young stud, who suddenly gets an attack of morality. But things are going so well, Grace tells her married beefcake, it would be a shame to stop. The man grimaces, thinks of his wife and promptly continues scoring with Grace. The moral? Detective **Grace Hanadarko** (where do they come up with these names?) always nabs her man, and the viewer gets yet another female lead whose sexuality smolders after her 40th birthday. — "DesignStar," Sun, season 2 premiere, 10pm, **HGTV**. The reality/contest hit show has re-designed its set and location, but kept its core strengths from season 1. **SA**

### Basic Cable Rankings

(7/09/07-7/15/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2.5	2290
2	USA	2	1924
3	TNT	1.9	1764
4	LIFE	1.4	1318
4	ESPN	1.4	1284
6	TBSC	1.2	1165
6	FOXN	1.2	1138
6	AMC	1.2	1098
6	HALL	1.2	976
10	DISC	1.1	1042
10	CORT	1.1	1009
10	TOON	1.1	983
13	A&E	1	974
13	HGTV	1	955
13	FAM	1	929
13	HIST	1	923
13	SCIF	1	917
13	SPK	1	895
19	FX	0.9	863
19	TLC	0.9	802
21	NAN	0.8	791
21	MTV	0.8	757
21	FOOD	0.8	727
21	LMN	0.8	451
25	TVLD	0.7	668
25	CMDY	0.7	658
27	CNN	0.6	586
27	VH1	0.6	517
27	BET	0.6	500
27	BRAV	0.6	500
31	MSNB	0.5	476
31	EN	0.5	412
31	TV1	0.5	211
34	APL	0.4	408
34	TTC	0.4	375
34	SOAP	0.4	282
34	NGC	0.4	274
34	TDSN	0.4	225
39	HLN	0.3	324
39	ESP2	0.3	316
39	CMT	0.3	297
39	WGNC	0.3	238
39	OXYG	0.3	229
39	GSN	0.3	200
39	SPD	0.3	199
39	WE	0.3	193

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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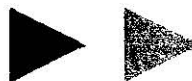
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**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein**Close to a Winner**

FX's recent success with originals has led to a surge in the net's star power, and "Damages" (Jul 24, 10pm) serves testament with an impressive cast that includes acting icons *Glenn Close* and *Ted Danson*. The mere involvement of Close—who blistered the 80's silver screen, earning 5 Oscar nominations for superb performances in "Fatal Attraction" and "Dangerous Liaisons," among others—will lure a passel of viewers, as will Danson, fondly recalled by millions for his "Cheers" exploits. Unfortunately, when viewers do arrive to the cutthroat world of high-stakes litigation portrayed in the show, they will realize the pair's best days have gone the way of leg warmers. It truly hurts to write this, but Close is just fair as an icy and ruthless litigator, and Danson rates just a notch below that as a stalked billionaire. Even the storylines initially smack of prosaicism, and I've never been fond of anachronistic plots. But come the pilot's conclusion, I was a convert. The fantastic writing trumped all of my aforementioned grievances and delivered the show absolution. In fact, it's what cemented Close's participation. "It was written so well that it was a no-brainer," said NYC-based Close of the show's script at TCA on Thurs. "The chance to do a complex character and in my own backyard was too good to pass up." Indeed, there is room for plenty of compelling depth to not only Close's character, but to others as well. And the little exhibited in the pilot proves promising. Also, the supporting cast is definitely an able bunch, especially *Tate Donovan* and *Zeljko Ivanek*, and *Anastasia Griffith* is supremely sweet eye candy. Like the show or not, your assessment won't be interrupted, as Cadillac is sponsoring the commercial-free premiere. I'm hoping Close and Danson get to drive all over my initial reaction by becoming better as the season rolls on. No "Damages" done. *CH*

**Highlight:** "Mad Men" Thurs, 10pm, **AMC**. It's impossible to know from a pilot alone whether or not a series will be a hit. But this excellent pilot for a series about Madison Ave advertising execs in 1960 fits AMC's "TV for movie people" tagline perfectly. Filled with subtleties and strong writing, it looks feels and sounds like a classic film, the way episodes of HBO's "The Sopranos" did. It should, it's shot on film and The Sopranos' exec prod/writer Matthew Weiner is its creator, and he's brought Sopranos alum Allan Taylor over to direct the pilot. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Without Prejudice," Tues, 9pm, **GSN**. We're sad to see GSN chief and one of cable's nicest *Rich Cronin* leaving, but he's departing on a creative high with the recent launch of "Camouflage" and now this series, which began overseas. The premise sounds simple: 5 contestants argue they should be awarded a \$25K prize, while 5 others judge that claim. If the 10 people are consistently interesting "Without Prejudice" could become an addiction. -- "America's Next Producer," Wed, 8pm, **TV Guide Channel**. Yet another reality/contest series, but this has depth and (gasp) contestants older than 45. Additionally, judges' comments are interesting. *SA* [More reviews, including Lifetime's "State of Mind" and TLC's "A Model Life with Petra Nemcova," Friday afternoon at cable360.net]

**Basic Cable Rankings**

(7/02/07-7/08/07)

**Mon-Sun Prime**

1	TNT	2.5	2328
2	USA	1.9	1824
2	DSNY	1.9	1762
4	LIFE	1.2	1168
4	FAM	1.2	1090
4	HALL	1.2	980
7	TBSC	1.1	994
7	NAN	1.1	991
7	CORT	1.1	958
10	TOON	1	939
10	FOXN	1	932
10	A&E	1	926
10	FX	1	913
10	AMC	1	874
15	HIST	0.9	871
15	SPK	0.9	861
15	DISC	0.9	856
15	HGTV	0.9	835
15	SCIF	0.9	805
20	ESPN	0.8	766
20	TLC	0.8	753
22	TVLD	0.7	658
22	MTV	0.7	646
22	FOOD	0.7	638
22	CMDY	0.7	624
26	BET	0.6	554
26	VH1	0.6	539
26	CNN	0.6	520
26	LMN	0.6	364
30	BRAV	0.5	446
30	MSNB	0.5	446
30	APL	0.5	413
33	ESP2	0.4	382
33	EN	0.4	374
33	TTC	0.4	336
33	CMT	0.4	334
33	HLN	0.4	332
33	WGNC	0.4	277
33	NGC	0.4	239
33	SOAP	0.4	235
41	OXYG	0.3	241
41	WE	0.3	186
41	TDSN	0.3	184
41	STYL	0.3	182
41	GSN	0.3	163
41	TV1	0.3	123

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Teeing Up Reality

Golf is one of those rare sports in which participants aren't afforded teammates on which to lean for assistance, or to assign blame during mistake-filled trials. Sure, duffers the world over routinely seek scapegoats in equipment (the sweet spot's too small!), weather (the wind took that one!), fauna (damn gopher stole my ball!), and even the proverbial "Golf Gods" (of course three straight pars is out of the question!). But none of these deserves the punishment. Perhaps the game's solitary nature (at least as singular shots are concerned) leads so many to seek improvement through myriad golf gadgets, which range from the inspired to the inane, strive to help with facets ranging from swing speed to putting confidence, and are endorsed and/or derived by touring pros to instructors to downright kooks. Now down the fairway comes **The Golf Channel's "Fore Inventors Only"** (Jul 10, 10pm ET), in which 103 people were gleaned from 4K applicants for the chance to be named a golf innovator. While viewers will see good, bad and ridiculous inventions, "some of the simple inventions are going to go the farthest," said sr prod Jay Kossoff. The show also focuses on the human element, in some cases opting to feature particularly compelling people even if their designs are worthy of triple bogeys. If the formula sounds similar to a current ABC series, it is. But Kossoff said Fore's tailoring to golfers and their sensibilities makes for a better overall product. No, the show doesn't have *George Foreman* as a panelist/judge, but several golf strata are effectively covered with the participation of *Golf for Women* sr editor Stina Sternberg, instructor Bill Harmon and player Fulton Allem. What results is a knowledgeable and entertaining crew, a description that I only wish applied to my usual playing partners. At least they're worse than I am. *CH*

**Highlight:** "Greek," Mon, 9pm, **ABC Family**. The college years have become fertile territory for cable. Last week saw the premiere of *The N*'s promising "The Best Years." This week includes a college-based dramedy about a freshman geek who desperately wants to go Greek. ABC Family's strongest series to date, "Greek" mixes the music and soap opera feel of "Desperate Housewives" with the antics and lasciviousness of "Animal House" (Are we allowed to say that of a Disney property, especially one shown on ABC Family?). The result is pure hoot. The hype about the ensemble cast will center around *Kelsey Grammer's* daughter Spencer, who has a pivotal role as an arrogant sorority sister whose brother is the freshman geek, a fact she keeps hidden. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "The Bronx Is Burning," Mon, 10pm ET, **ESPN**. Baseball fans younger than 35 may find this nicely done rehash of Steinbrenner's early days with the Yankees interesting. Those older already know the story, and eps 1-3 don't add much to the saga. The bigger question: Will this 8-part series grab eyeballs? Probably, especially with a lead-in at 8pm from "Home Run Derby" (including *Kenny Mayne* reporting from a kayak in McCovey Cove). *SA* [More reviews, including TCM's "Spielberg" and BBC America's "Gordon Ramsay" Friday afternoon at cable360.net].

### Basic Cable Rankings

(5/28/07-7/01/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.2	2113
2	DSNY	2.1	1957
3	TNT	2	1861
4	TBSC	1.5	1395
5	LIFE	1.4	1296
6	FOXN	1.3	1219
7	ESPN	1.2	1113
8	TOON	1.1	1065
8	NAN	1.1	1053
8	A&E	1.1	1027
8	HALL	1.1	899
12	SPK	1	967
12	DISC	1	965
12	SCIF	1	934
12	CORT	1	907
12	HIST	1	902
12	HGTV	1	901
18	FX 0.9	862	
19	CMDY	0.8	779
19	AMC	0.8	767
19	FAM	0.8	741
19	TLC	0.8	728
23	MTV	0.7	694
23	CNN	0.7	690
23	FOOD	0.7	656
23	TVLD	0.7	643
23	BET	0.7	612
28	ESP2	0.6	584
28	VH1	0.6	543
28	BRAV	0.6	507
28	LMN	0.6	328
32	APL	0.5	432
32	EN	0.5	429
34	MSNB	0.4	392
34	HLN	0.4	379
34	TTC	0.4	338
34	WGNC	0.4	266
34	SOAP	0.4	263
34	NGC	0.4	247
34	TDSN	0.4	239
41	OXYG	0.3	250
41	CMT	0.3	244
41	SPD	0.3	188
41	GSN	0.3	184
41	WE	0.3	173
41	DHLT	0.3	172

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Character Acting, USA Style

USA shot out more fodder to reinforce its "Characters Welcome" tagline with the Thurs premiere of "Burn Notice," a sharp, fast-paced original series that's long on action and eccentricity. The lethal and sardonic lead is an ostracized special agent, banished to the Miami he loathes, who's burning to know why his identity has been effectively erased and his past exploits officially nullified. Add to the chaotic yet compelling mix a fight-happy and sexy ex-girlfriend, a besotted cohort that helps in myriad ways and an annoying mother, and the series fans the flames of USA's recent programming success. "Burn Notice is as much fun as any show we've done," said evp, original programming Jeff Wachtel. "This one just came together, and we're big fans." Crime procedurals and anything law-related seems to fare quite well these days across cable and the broadcast nets, but this show's narrative and didactic thrust really handcuffs viewers to their sofas. Wachtel agrees, of course, yet is still measured when outlining his expectations. "Everybody's really nervous around here," he said. "In cable, we assume success, but we need most of what we launch to work." Luckily for USA, much of what it produces works quite well, what with a lineup that includes "Monk," "Psyche" and this year's "The Starter Wife." The net has a formula and has been sticking with it. "Our viewers have come to expect shows that are character-based, with aspiring sensibilities and a few quirks to the main characters," said Wachtel. True to this form, "Burn Notice" will continue this summer with a weekly case, dynamic interaction among all the aforementioned roles, and a hero who's steered by mythological notions such as the reclamation of identity through seemingly endless tribulations. Scrape away all of this background—burn it, so to speak—and the series still remains stylish and sexy. Should anything less be expected from a spy show set in Miami? *CH*

**Highlights:** "Coma," Tues, 9pm, HBO. We recommend this doc with the caveat that it's some of the most difficult footage ever seen. Filmmaker Diane Arbus follows four patients, all relatively young, who've emerged from comas. To the untrained, though, they barely seem to be alive. In fact, they are minimally conscious. Euthanasia and other heavy questions fill one's conscious after even a few minutes of this grave piece. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Styleyes Miami," season 3 premiere, Wed, 11pm ET, SiTV. "Queer Eye" alum Jai Rodriguez makes a pleasant host for this magazine show exploring Miami's clubs, food, music and fashion. Wed's premiere about Cuban Miami is a mix of hot and tamer elements. Clips of late salsa icon Celia Cruz sizzle, as do females from rapper Pitbull's Miami-based video. Items on cigars and dominoes seem to have less appeal to the 18-34-year-old Latinos SiTV covets. Future eps about clubbing, music and gender issues (featuring Miami Dolphins cheerleaders) should grab more eyeballs. — "Gospel Music Atlanta," Sun, 4pm ET, Gospel Music Channel. Do viewers want to listen to gospel performers talk about their craft or listen to them belt out a tune? When it's gospel's Dorothy Norwood telling how she met Mick Jagger, we're listening. [More reviews, including The N's "Best Years" and GSN's "Camouflage," at [cable360.net](http://cable360.net)] SA

### Basic Cable Rankings

(6/18/07-6/24/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2.5	2272
2	USA	2.1	1949
3	TNT	2	1852
4	TBSC	1.5	1443
5	FOXN	1.4	1332
5	LIFE	1.4	1283
7	TOON	1.2	1146
8	ESPN	1.1	1057
8	SPK	1.1	1051
8	SCIF	1.1	978
8	HALL	1.1	899
12	DISC	1	992
12	A&E	1	972
12	NAN	1	955
12	HGTV	1	933
12	CORT	1	926
17	HIST	0.9	864
17	ESP2	0.9	858
17	FX	0.9	846
20	FAM	0.8	779
20	TLC	0.8	741
20	CNN	0.8	739
23	MTV	0.7	680
23	AMC	0.7	675
23	CMDY	0.7	667
23	FOOD	0.7	639
23	TVLD	0.7	629
28	BRAV	0.6	526
28	LMN	0.6	345
30	VH1	0.5	445
30	BET	0.5	426
30	HLN	0.5	421
33	APL	0.4	405
33	EN	0.4	403
33	MSNB	0.4	399
33	TTC	0.4	341
33	SOAP	0.4	250
33	TDSN	0.4	245
33	NGC	0.4	228
40	CMT	0.3	299
40	OXYG	0.3	246
40	WGNC	0.3	224
40	SPD	0.3	197
40	WE	0.3	194
40	GSN	0.3	188
40	NKTN	0.3	121

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

### Lighting A Fuse

As the title aptly implies, ESPN's "The Bronx is Burning" (Jul 9, 10pm ET) crackles with flammability. Based on the eponymous book, the net's 1st miniseries is anchored by the '77 NY Yankees, a team led by fiery manager *Billy Martin*, whose incendiary relationships with owner *George Steinbrenner* and outspoken star *Reggie Jackson* produce a bounty of fireworks. Further acceleration to the flame is added by a historical backdrop that cloaked NYC in crime, a brutal heat wave, terror surrounding the Son of Sam serial killings and contentious political races. All these strata combined to form a compelling foundation for ESPN's 8-hr series. "You really need the backdrop of the city to express what the team meant to the city's resurgence," said net svp, original events *Ron Semiao*, who noted the series' multi-generational appeal. "People can relive that time, but children can also learn about it as a history lesson." After securing an impressive cast that includes film vets *John Turturro* (Martin) and *Oliver Platt* (Steinbrenner), maintaining the authenticity of both the social and team climate became critical. "Because of the subject matter there's sort of a nostalgic glow surrounding it," said exec prod *Mike Tollin*. "We decided early on to create an aura by setting up the drama and setting the scenes." To do this, Tollin intersperses actual footage from games, press conferences, and news outlets with shot scenes, and the melding works quite well. NY native Turturro donned prosthetic ears to more accurately portray Martin, and Platt worked to get Steinbrenner's "Rust Belt bark" just right. No question, the pair possesses immense talent, and *Daniel Sunjata* admirably portrays the egoist Jackson. The 1st ep steps to the plate following ESPN's coverage of the MLB's homerun contest, a particularly appropriate lead-in given Jackson's prodigious prowess with round-trippers. For its part, ESPN hopes to provide an enjoyable trip back in time. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Semper Fi: One Marine's Journey," Mon, 8:30pm, **Showtime**. True, this special highlights the experiences of a gay Marine, whose important story should not be underplayed. But just as important, it's an eyewitness account of service in Iraq and the difficulties of returning home to what should be a more civil existence. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Girl, Posi+ive," Mon, 9pm, **Lifetime**. Critics may complain about "Girl, Posi+ive" as a film, but they can't challenge it as an information vehicle. Between chapters of a predictable story about high school students and AIDS is faux user-generated content, vlogs of teens talking about AIDS. Taken alone they form a PSA that illustrates how ill-informed kids are about AIDS. The film's thrust about AIDS testing coincides with National HIV Testing Day June 27. (Cable Positive's PSA campaign on testing is free to cable operators). — "Heart Land," Mon, 10pm, **TNT**. Ep 2 of this series about a transplant surgeon wasn't appreciably better than its so-so pilot, but it's not bad—plus it gets strong medicine from its lead-in, "The Closer" at 9pm. — "Hey Paula," Thurs, 10pm, **Bravo**. Good call by Bravo trying to grab the residue of popularity (and ratings) from "Idol." Pretty, perky and scrappy, Paula's glam life isn't rich with meaning, but Bravo knows reality and makes this mildly entertaining. *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

(6/11/07-6/17/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.1	2003
2	DSNY	2	1845
3	TNT	1.7	1642
4	TBSC	1.6	1524
5	LIFE	1.4	1304
6	FOXN	1.2	1150
7	NAN	1.1	1042
7	ESPN	1.1	1035
7	DISC	1.1	1016
7	A&E	1.1	987
7	HALL	1.1	981
12	TOON	1	973
12	HIST	1	943
12	SPK	1	939
12	SCIF	1	907
12	CORT	1	874
17	HGTV	0.9	875
17	FX	0.9	810
17	CMDY	0.9	792
20	FAM	0.8	774
20	AMC	0.8	717
22	TLC	0.7	669
22	FOOD	0.7	625
24	TVLD	0.6	574
24	CNN	0.6	573
24	VH1	0.6	563
24	MTV	0.6	534
24	LMN	0.6	335
29	ESP2	0.5	499
29	BRAV	0.5	469
29	APL	0.5	467
29	EN	0.5	467
29	BET	0.5	410
29	TDSN	0.5	284
35	MSNB	0.4	348
35	HLN	0.4	337
35	TTC	0.4	317
35	WGNC	0.4	271
35	OXYG	0.4	266
35	SOAP	0.4	266
35	NGC	0.4	243
42	CMT	0.3	236
42	WE	0.3	193
42	DHLT	0.3	185
42	SPD	0.3	183
42	GSN	0.3	172

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

### Ringside Seats to Life

Laila Ali is a bad, bad woman. At 5'10" and 175lbs, the undefeated pro pugilist is unrivaled in her sport, pummeling challengers with ferocious fists and supreme confidence. That the latter flirts heavily with arrogance is not surprising, as many of Laila's attributes are owed to her father, *Muhammad Ali*, perhaps the greatest fighter of all time and certainly the most evocative elocutionist the sport has ever witnessed. But **TV One's** "Daddy's Girl" also highlights the softer sides of Muhammad Ali's eldest daughter, from the strained early relationship with her father to her troubled youth to her relished role as a paragon for women everywhere. The resulting amalgam is one that TV One believes will have people of both genders and all ages answering the viewership bell. "This is literally the perfect fit for our demo range [adults 25-54]. We know they love her... she attacks everything with the same determination," said net evp, programming and development *Rose Catherine Pinkney*. The depicted humanization of a famous personality—who more importantly is a strong African-American woman—led Pinkney to eagerly jump into the ring with Ali. "We spent more money being involved with this project than we ever have," she said, adding that this is the net's 1st commissioned full-length doc. Indeed, the investment represents a changing focus for TV One in its constant fight for cable relevance, a 4-year battle that has produced distribution in nearly 40m homes. The goal is to "broaden the scope of genres on our air as well as the kinds of people we have on air," said Pinkney. "Our hope is to encompass all the parts of African American culture." To that end, reality, comedy and soon competition are all adding punch to the net's content arsenal. And make no mistake: Laila Ali is a knock out in many ways. *CH*

**Highlights:** "The Closer," season III premiere, Mon, 9pm, **TNT**. Season 3 certainly is a charm, as "The Closer" takes a chance with tonight's premiere. It's an unorthodox opening but one that works beautifully. Fortunately, there's not much more tinkering, as producers let be a formula that's worked—a focus on police work and multi-suspect cases with interesting twists. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Confessions of a Matchmaker," Sat, 10 pm, **A&E**. Matchmaker *Patti Novak's* stories are mildly intriguing, and A&E is one of cable's best reality programmers. An interesting client is John, 41, a handsome virgin. But Patti won't find a mate unless you submit to her tough love: lose weight, change your makeup and, here, quit talking about your virginity. — "Heartland," Mon, 10 pm, **TNT**. Viewers go from "The Closer" at 9 to the cutter at 10 with "Heartland," a series about a transplant surgeon (Treat Williams) who, in the words of his ex-wife, is a megalomaniac and "has screwed every nurse within 5 miles" of the hospital. Handsome and stiff, Williams is fine as a handsome, stiff sawbones whose dedication and righteousness rival "M\*A\*S\*H's" Dr Hawkeye Pierce. Heartland's biggest problem is its predictability; and its dangerously high cliché count could land it in intensive care. The prognosis—a strong dose of The Closer ensures its viability. [More reviews, including *Showtime's* "Meadowlands," at: [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)] *SA*

#### Basic Cable Rankings

(6/04/07-6/10/07)

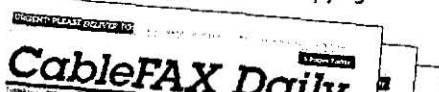
#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.2	2088
2	DSNY	2	1815
3	TBSC	1.7	1617
4	TNT	1.6	1549
5	FOXN	1.4	1269
6	LIFE	1.2	1161
6	NAN	1.2	1101
6	HALL	1.2	966
9	FX	1.1	1039
9	A&E	1.1	1032
9	TOON	1.1	1027
12	DISC	1	946
12	SPK	1	940
12	SCIF	1	918
12	HGTV	1	905
12	CORT	1	855
17	ESP2	0.9	846
17	HIST	0.9	820
17	ESPN	0.9	811
17	AMC	0.9	790
21	TLC	0.8	752
21	CMDY	0.8	743
21	FOOD	0.8	715
24	CNN	0.7	700
24	MTV	0.7	682
24	FAM	0.7	679
24	TVLD	0.7	634
24	BRAV	0.7	571
29	VH1	0.6	601
29	BET	0.6	472
31	EN	0.5	435
31	APL	0.5	432
31	WGNC	0.5	322
31	LMN	0.5	286
35	MSNB	0.4	389
35	HLN	0.4	366
35	TTC	0.4	335
35	NGC	0.4	289
35	SOAP	0.4	282
35	TDSN	0.4	237
41	CMT	0.3	255
41	OXYG	0.3	251
41	TVGC	0.3	217
41	GSN	0.3	183
41	SPD	0.3	180
41	DHLT	0.3	167

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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**WHAT THE  
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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## ThiNKiNg Young

It's unlikely that many high-profile cable execs such as **Discovery Comm** pres/CEO *David Zaslav* have a tattoo, but would it be a big surprise if corner offices everywhere were colored by ink? Not likely, since skin art has effectively bled into the mainstream over the last decade, especially in warm climates such as FL, NV and southern CA. It comes as little shock, then, that **TLC's** "Miami Ink," which kicks off its 3rd season Tues (10pm), ranks among the net's top 5 series in viewership through May. "The minute the show launched, it struck the tattoo community with authenticity," said **TLC** svp, programming and development *Christian Drobnyk*, who also noted compelling characters, amazing artistry and emotional storytelling as key reasons for the show's success. Whether by all these reasons or a combination, lured to the series' South Beach shop are viewers with a median age in the low 30s—the lowest for the net—and comprised of half men, half women. "This is a community of people that lends a coolness that we really enjoy and offers a strong new media proposition as well," said Drobnyk. This season, the show's main characters are bogged down by marital woes, health problems and other business endeavors while the all-important clientele remains as eclectic as tattoos from around the world. Slated for ink are a Satanist, a blind actor and an 80-year-old woman seeking her first piece. "There's a great element of story that makes the meat of every tattoo," said Drobnyk. It's true: ask most anyone about their skin art and you'll receive a very personal account of origin, experience, etc. So many, in fact, that **TLC** has commenced production for "L.A. Ink" with *Kat Von D.*, a former cast member of the original. While the success of the franchise's West Coast endeavor isn't inked in stone, colorful personalities and tattoos are definite. *CH*

**Obit:** "The Sopranos," Sun, 9pm, **HBO**. The biggest no-brainer must-see on dramatic TV since the *Who Shot J.R.?* ep or the "M\*A\*S\*H" finale. We've been deluged with emails asking if we know the ending. Sorry. **HBO's** security is better than *Ft Knox*. Among the obvious: Tony sings like a soprano and heads to witness protection; enmeshed in a bloodbath, Tony takes his own life; it was all just a dream; and *Paulie* betrays Tony and *Phil* but emerges like a cockroach after a nuclear attack, and is the lone survivor. *SA*

**Highlights:** "Rescue Me," 10pm, Wed, **FX**, and "Big Love," Mon, 9pm, **HBO**. We missed these series, which are leaving their regular nights but aren't losing their edge. In fact, the early eps for both were stellar. Sex is important to both. Don't miss Tommy calling the kettle black with his 18-year-old daughter on "Rescue." And as if Bill hasn't enough trouble, he's expanding the trio to a quartet. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "John From Cincinnati," Sun, 10pm, **HBO**. Huh? I had no idea what was going on during "Carnivale," but I was patient and was rewarded. "John" makes *Carnivale* seem like "Little House on the Prairie." But *Ed "Al Bundy" O'Neill* makes it watchable. — "The Tudors," season finale, Sun, 10pm, **Showtime**. Still good to be king. *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

(5/28/07-6/03/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.7	2503
2	USA	2.5	2313
3	DSNY	1.9	1747
4	ESPN	1.7	1646
5	LIFE	1.4	1308
6	TBSC	1.3	1204
7	TOON	1.2	1112
8	A&E	1.1	1051
8	FOXN	1.1	1032
8	SPK	1.1	1013
8	NAN	1.1	995
12	CMDY	1	967
12	MTV	1	962
12	DISC	1	947
12	CORT	1	903
12	HGTV	1	902
12	HALL	1	859
18	HIST	0.9	885
18	AMC	0.9	855
18	SCIF	0.9	850
21	FX	0.8	770
21	TLC	0.8	736
21	FAM	0.8	709
21	TVLD	0.8	703
25	FOOD	0.7	663
25	CNN	0.7	649
27	VH1	0.6	596
27	LMN	0.6	326
29	BET	0.5	462
29	BRAV	0.5	445
29	EN	0.5	437
32	APL	0.4	412
32	ESP2	0.4	385
32	MSNB	0.4	380
32	TTC	0.4	351
32	SOAP	0.4	273
32	OXYG	0.4	262
38	HLN	0.3	274
38	WGNC	0.3	237
38	TWC	0.3	236
38	TVGC	0.3	233
38	NGC	0.3	224
38	VS	0.3	221
38	CMT	0.3	220
38	TDSN	0.3	202
38	GSN	0.3	199

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Viewer Enlistment

Lifetime's new original series "Army Wives" (Sun, 10pm) already has a lot of weight to bear on its decorated shoulders. It signifies "changes at Lifetime... to create shows that are relevant," said svp, series programming *Maria Grasso*. "We want people to do a double-take, to pause and take notice. The core Lifetime audience will hear about the show, but it will also surprise other people." What's most noticeable about the new series is the cast—and not only for the breathtaking beauty that's represented. Sure, *Kim Delaney* and *Catherine Bell* are stunning, but their strong performances are buttressed by true talent, particularly that of newcomer *Sally Pressman*, who plays a less-than-urbane spouse adjusting to military life. Of the plot's many storylines, Pressman's character provides the most compelling content, at least initially, followed closely by Delaney's character, the respected and savvy wife of a colonel. The benefit of having a recognizable and attractive cast is not lost on Grasso. "Army Wives achieves everything we want," she said. "Anything that is familiar is very valuable, [and] if this show is on, men shouldn't want to leave the room." Likely true, but the myriad characters make for some cloying and trite undercurrents, which may irk some viewers. Examples: the inclusion of a pair of catty gossipers hint at, well... cat fights to come. And Bell's character suffers from chronic abuse at the hands of her son, a plotline that seems a bit contrived. Not surprising, since exec prod *Mark Gordon* serves the same role for "Grey's Anatomy." Even so, I am not afraid to admit that "Army Wives" is compelling and enjoyable, estrogen excesses or not. 6 eps will run through Jul 15, when new ones will be prefaced on Sundays by 2 additional original series, "Side Order of Life" and "State of Mind." Call it a summer boot camp for Lifetime's new original perspective. *CH*

**Highlights:** "The Universe: Mars," Tues, 9pm, **History**. Yes, it's **The History Channel** feeling a bit like **Science Channel**, but this well-done 2nd ep is a good mix of education, entertainment and fun. That's because its talking heads are lively, and Mars fascinates. If there's life on the red planet, it doesn't go on at night, due to awful dust storms and temperatures of 100 degrees below zero. And Mars is like a bad restaurant: there's no atmosphere, at least none humans can handle. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Write & Wrong," Sun, 8pm, **Lifetime**. Lifetime can laugh at itself. As it retools and seeks youthful viewers with *Andrea Wong*, it's secure enough to run this sardonic and entertaining slap at Hollywood's obsession with young demos and young women. But beyond the excellent opening and some good moments, this vehicle for *Kirstie Alley* is a one-joke piece. — "Shot in the Dark," Sun, 10:30pm, **HBO**. The ultimate catharsis. A 23-year-old unknown actor seeks his bio dad, with the camera rolling. It works, barely, because the son is *Adrian Grenier*, now of HBO's "Entourage," and we want to see who fathered that handsome hunk. Most of the film is a dispassionate drag, but hang—it picks up at 60 minutes. [For more reviews, including "Inside the Green Berets" and "Herbie Hancock: Possibilities", see [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)] *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings (5/21/07-5/27/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	1.9	1795
1	USA	1.9	1788
3	DSNY	1.8	1641
4	TBSC	1.2	1141
4	LIFE	1.2	1114
6	ESPN	1.1	1051
6	NAN	1.1	1031
6	TOON	1.1	992
9	FOXN	1	922
10	A&E	0.9	857
10	SPK	0.9	852
10	HGTV	0.9	851
10	DISC	0.9	826
10	CORT	0.9	824
10	FX	0.9	784
10	SCIF	0.9	769
10	HALL	0.9	708
18	FAM	0.8	774
18	HIST	0.8	742
18	MTV	0.8	695
18	AMC	0.8	691
22	TLC	0.7	678
22	CMDY	0.7	672
22	TVLD	0.7	615
25	FOOD	0.6	559
25	VH1	0.6	513
27	CNN	0.5	468
27	BET	0.5	441
27	ESP2	0.5	439
27	APL	0.5	418
27	BRAV	0.5	389
27	LMN	0.5	289
33	MSNB	0.4	337
33	EN	0.4	320
33	SOAP	0.4	254
33	NGC	0.4	248
33	TDSN	0.4	219
38	TTC	0.3	285
38	HLN	0.3	262
38	WGNC	0.3	233
38	TVGC	0.3	231
38	OXYG	0.3	224
43	CMT	0.2	203
43	TWC	0.2	188
43	CNBC	0.2	168
43	MTV2	0.2	156

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## No Force-d Enjoyment

I have greatly enjoyed each ep of the "Star Wars" saga, and even played with franchise figurines when I was a young boy in the '80s. But I must admit that skepticism—and certainly not the Force—dominated my initial reaction to **The History Channel's** "Star Wars: The Legacy Revealed" (May 28, 9pm). You see, the program asserts that the saga is laced with important parallels to historic myths of power, politics and spirituality, and that this linkage to iconic figures such as King Arthur, Zeus, and Lucifer himself is responsible for Star Wars' endurance. I just thought such investigation and conjecture was better suited to the real fanatics; you know, the ones who dress as Princess Leia with hair buns the size of Kaiser rolls. Surprisingly, though, I found the assertions intuitive, not insipid, and the arguments compelling instead of contrived. Net exec prod *Beth Dietrich Segarra*, with whom I spoke prior to viewing the special, noted, "The great thing about Star Wars is that it resonates with so many people. I wanted to make sure the film gave new insight to the hardcore fan, but I also needed to make sure the average viewer could grasp the concepts." Obviously the latter goal was accomplished with me. I don't know about the former, but there is certainly no shortage of fervor. Just check out the Star Wars celebration in L.A. this weekend, staged to commemorate the 1st ep's 30th anniversary (May 25). Or witness the USPS' weekend issue of 15 postage stamps paying tribute to *George Lucas*' vision. Still, perhaps the best indication of Star Wars' embedment in our national fabric is the participation by so many luminaries—*Dan Rather*, *Tom Brokaw*, *Newt Gingrich*—in the net's homage. All believe the saga will endure a long, long time, and in places far, far away. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee," Sun, 9pm, **HBO**. While America remembers and salutes its military, HBO unearths a less pleasing memory this weekend. This depiction of America's unfortunate treatment of Native-Americans during the latter half of the 19th century is a story so rarely told that it demands attention for that alone. Fortunately, there's much more here, as HBO Films has produced a fairly accurate document with strong acting and excellent production values. — "Star Wars: The Legacy Revealed," Mon, 9pm, **History Channel**. Can't you hear History screaming, "No, we're not The World War II channel—even on Memorial Day!" But History eschews history light for at least 30 minutes of this special with an interesting lesson about Prof *Joseph Campbell's* influence on *George Lucas*. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Pandemic," Sat, 9pm, **Hallmark**. Since when did Hallmark Channel become **SciFi/USA**? This weekend apparently, as the family channel unleashes an entertaining (but medically suspect) 3-hr epic about a deadly flu-like sickness that's spreading around Los Angeles. And did we mention terrorism, sexual innuendo and more divorcees than you'll find at a 50+ singles happy hour? Seen it before? Yes, if you caught "Outbreak" ('95), but not with *Faye Dunaway* as the governor and *Tiffany Thiessen* as a doctor who saves the world (while breaking *Zach Morris*' heart). [More reviews, including *MoJo's* "The Show," see [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)] *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

(5/14/07-5/20/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.2	2074
1	TNT	2.2	2016
3	DSNY	1.8	1674
4	ESPN	1.6	1476
5	FOXN	1.2	1085
5	NAN	1.2	1074
5	TOON	1.2	1062
8	LIFE	1.1	1014
9	TBSC	1	929
10	SPK	0.9	863
10	CORT	0.9	826
10	HGTV	0.9	819
10	HALL	0.9	773
10	SPD	0.9	605
15	A&E	0.8	786
15	FX	0.8	773
15	HIST	0.8	763
15	SCIF	0.8	761
15	AMC	0.8	732
15	DISC	0.8	716
21	CMDY	0.7	656
21	TVLD	0.7	644
21	MTV	0.7	634
21	TLC	0.7	631
25	VH1	0.6	578
25	FAM	0.6	544
25	FOOD	0.6	518
28	CNN	0.5	501
28	BET	0.5	460
28	LMN	0.5	255
31	APL	0.4	400
31	BRAV	0.4	378
31	MSNB	0.4	369
31	EN	0.4	341
31	VS	0.4	279
31	OXYG	0.4	262
31	SOAP	0.4	242
31	NGC	0.4	236
31	TDSN	0.4	221
40	TTC	0.3	300
40	ESP2	0.3	299
40	HLN	0.3	282
40	TVGC	0.3	224
40	WGNC	0.3	202
40	GSN	0.3	171
46	TWC	0.2	183

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

### Lions, Leopards and Grizzlies, Oh My!

Nat Geo hatched last week at **NGCWild.com** a broadband service featuring short- and long-form content within 4 initial categories: amazing moments, animal preservation, predation and the tamer side. Amid an attractive and easily navigable site, users can catch videos highlighting a king cobra being caught for relocation, fur seals brawling for territory or reasons for a falling dolphin population in the Mediterranean. "It's all about celebrating animals in nature with a focus on the preservation angle," said Nat Geo vp, research and digital media **Brad Dancer**, who noted that the service will become a key extension of the net's **Save Our Planet** conservation initiative when it launches this fall. The campaign will get its own channel on the site, as will the **Wildlife Conservation Society**, the org that runs the Bronx Zoo. Until then, user feedback is determining what works and what doesn't on the site, where content will be rotated weekly, said Dancer. That users currently spend an average of 15min perusing content is promising, but big plans are already in the offing. A primary goal remains for the site to "become very fluid and transparent with users," said Dancer, through content sharing and online discussions. Tech upgrades for full-screen viewing are underway, and Wild will emerge this summer on cable VOD and mobile devices. The overarching goal for the service is to be everywhere that consumers want it, a common thrust among today's evolving content owners. It's just not everyone that can proffer footage of a man crawling into an alligator den or of humpback whales coordinating for a fish hunt. At **NGCWild.com**, the common digital term "quick bites" assumes an entirely different meaning. **CH**

**Highlights:** "Act of Honor, El Honor De Un Sacrificio," Sat, 7pm ET, **History Channel & History Channel en Espanol**. Those who have not sustained a personal loss in Iraq often think of the thousands of U.S. troops who have perished there as nameless and faceless. This simple doc rectifies that wrong for one patriotic soldier. -- "Gabon, The Last Eden," Friday, 10pm, **Nat Geo**. With media's focus on edgy fare, this nature program is a throwback, but thank goodness Nat Geo's doing it. Gabon makes an excellent subject: a lush, exotic land, loaded with photogenic animals endangered by poachers. Add the ravages of a civil war, a bureaucracy with a will to preserve nature and **Glenn Close's** adept narration. **SA**

**Worth a Look:** "Wide Awake," Wed, 8pm, **HBO**. What came first, the night or the night owl? **Alan Berliner** doesn't ask that question in his humorous, first-person look at the not-so-amusing problem of sleep deprivation, but his curiosity is entertaining. Does Berliner's insomnia derive from hearing his parents battle late at night? Or is sleeplessness genetic? Could sleep deprivation be a synonym for human error? A sobering thought: a person without sleep for 24 hours has the same reaction time as someone who's legally drunk. Credit **HBO** for giving this doc an alternate premiere at a time when those who need it most can watch it—Wed at 1:30 am. [More reviews, including **GSN's** Salute to **Bob Barker**, at **www.cable360.net**] **SA**

#### Basic Cable Rankings

(5/07/07-5/13/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.1	1978
2	DSNY	1.9	1693
3	USA	1.7	1554
4	ESPN	1.2	1138
4	TBSC	1.2	1122
4	TOON	1.2	1106
4	FOXN	1.2	1060
8	NAN	1	968
8	LIFE	1	931
8	A&E	1	888
8	HALL	1	785
12	CORT	0.9	824
12	SCIF	0.9	788
14	DISC	0.8	777
14	SPK	0.8	763
14	HGTV	0.8	759
14	FX	0.8	750
14	HIST	0.8	711
14	FAM	0.8	703
20	CMDY	0.7	673
20	TLC	0.7	662
20	MTV	0.7	610
23	VH1	0.6	594
23	TVLD	0.6	580
23	AMC	0.6	546
23	CNN	0.6	525
23	BET	0.6	470
28	FOOD	0.5	489
28	ESP2	0.5	421
28	BRAY	0.5	396
28	VS	0.5	351
28	LMN	0.5	263
33	MSNB	0.4	382
33	EN	0.4	345
33	APL	0.4	319
33	SOAP	0.4	261
33	WGNC	0.4	253
38	HLN	0.3	297
38	TTC	0.3	281
38	CMT	0.3	221
38	TVGC	0.3	220
38	NGC	0.3	212
38	OXYG	0.3	208
38	TDSN	0.3	187
38	GSN	0.3	175
38	DSCI	0.3	147

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

## Free Webcast

### Cable Revs Up with Carrier Ethernet

Ciena and Communications Technology are presenting a free Webcast on Carrier Ethernet services. This Webcast will focus on cable's use of Carrier Ethernet services, including the enabling of business services and the certification process by the Metro Ethernet Forum.

#### Panelists:

Charles Bergren, Engineer Technology Development, Cabelabs  
 Benoit Legault, Product Marketing Director, Ciena  
 Glen Calafati, Director of Business Products, Optimum Lightpath  
 Louise Wasilewski, Co-Chair of Marketing, Metro Ethernet Forum

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

### Getting Its Kicks

Evidence of a growing, more aggressive Go!TV could be easily witnessed at The Cable Show, where the net shouted out with an attractive and expansive display, replete with a team of cute young women in referee outfits. Inside 5 years, the niche soccer play has netted 11mln subs, mirroring the surge in American soccer fanaticism derived mainly from an increasing Latino population and an efficient MLS. Now, armed with a \$200mln cash infusion through a Mar investment by SCP Worldwide, the Miami net is now sharpening its focus on differentiating content. While direct competitor Fox Soccer Channel's rights lineup is largely filled with English-dominated leagues such as the English Premier League, Go!TV kicks to viewers content with a decidedly Spanish bent. Content from Spain's La Liga does well, as does that from the Colombian league, said COO Rodrigo Lombello, who loves his net's positioning. To hit Go!TV's pitch in Sept are World Cup qualifying matches among South American nations, who arguably play the most beautiful and talented brand of soccer anywhere. To be sure, watching Brazil and Argentina play is quite gratifying. A large chunk of the net's sub base likely feels the same, as half (4mln) of the Latino-headed US households that subscribe to cable receive Go!TV, said Lombello. Meanwhile, 70% of the net's sub base receives programming in English, which allows for future growth across ethnicities. Advertisers are responding. The US Navy is a heavy sponsor of net content, as are Verizon, Dodge and Gatorade. And big things are expected at next week's upfront presentation. "We're starting to get worried that we won't have enough seats," said Lombello. GOOOAAALLL! CH

**Highlights:** "What If God Were The Sun?" Mon, 9pm, **Lifetime**. At the risk of our integrity we'll admit we were hooked by this sappy, predictable story about a young nurse with attitude (*Lacey Chabert*) who befriends a terminal older woman with more attitude and experience, played by *Gena Rowlands*. Throw in classical music, a love story or two, faith, mystery, an old house and you have diversionary entertainment whose quality won't be beat by the majority of **Lifetime** fare. The drama's also a neat way to attract a younger demo while not disturbing the network's older core. And then there's Rowlands, who raises the level of nearly anything she touches.

**Worth a Look:** "Innocent," Thurs, 8pm, **BBC Am**. Some may recognize that the workings of this series mirror The Innocence Project, the *Barry Sheck*-led group of law students working to free the wrongly imprisoned. This British takeoff features young and sometimes idealistic law students trying to do the same. A strong and attractive cast help the series succeed. -- "Mission Ops: Assignment IEDs," Tues, 10pm ET, **Discovery Times**. Going behind the headlines, this special is a useful if brief look at improvised explosive devices, the homemade bombs that are killing and maiming US soldiers in Iraq. [More reviews, including **Disney** and **Sci Fi** fare, at [cable360.net](http://cable360.net).] SA

### Basic Cable Rankings (4/30/07-5/06/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.2	2090
2	DSNY	1.8	1628
3	USA	1.7	1598
4	FOXN	1.2	1130
5	TBSC	1.1	1057
5	FX	1.1	1045
5	TOON	1.1	1013
5	NAN	1.1	1006
9	A&E	1	925
9	LIFE	1	918
9	HALL	1	835
12	ESPN	0.9	859
12	SPK	0.9	843
12	CORT	0.9	832
12	AMC	0.9	831
12	SCIF	0.9	797
17	HGTV	0.8	771
17	FAM	0.8	718
17	CMDY	0.8	697
17	HIST	0.8	693
21	DISC	0.7	692
21	TLC	0.7	677
21	MTV	0.7	673
21	TVLD	0.7	603
25	CNN	0.6	606
25	VH1	0.6	542
25	FOOD	0.6	535
25	LMN	0.6	315
29	BET	0.5	461
29	MSNB	0.5	453
31	ESP2	0.4	397
31	APL	0.4	369
31	BRAV	0.4	362
31	EN	0.4	356
31	VS	0.4	274
31	SOAP	0.4	267
31	WGN	0.4	261
38	TTC	0.3	304
38	HLN	0.3	301
38	OXYG	0.3	234
38	NGC	0.3	219
38	CMT	0.3	218
38	TVGC	0.3	216
38	GSN	0.3	191
38	TDSN	0.3	165
38	TV1	0.3	100

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Derby Daze

The outlook for Sat's 133rd running of the **Kentucky Derby** is as muddled as the Cable Show's exhibition floor will likely become in a few days. As numerous horses have a legitimate chance to take home the roses, nearly all of the title aspirants also have knocks against them. Depending on your point of view, the plethora of Derby coverage throughout this spring and this week on **ESPN**, **TVG** and **HRTV** serves as either a handicapping boon or bane. For my money, I'll take all the information I can digest, and the 3 nets have had no trouble obliging. HRTV moved its popular "Target Louisville" series to the famed Churchill Downs race track, offering this week a live version replete with the latest news and notes surrounding the most famous thoroughbred race in the world. "Our coverage is akin to ESPN's lead-in to the Super Bowl," said HRTV evp/GM *Jim Bates*. Meanwhile, ESPN saddled 23 hours of Derby-related programming, including content at **ESPNRadio.com** and on "SportsCenter" and numerous specials. ESPN analyst *Randy Moss* said the net benefits greatly from having retired jockey *Jerry Bailey* on its team. "His expertise is unmatched in horse racing," said Moss. TVG specialized this spring in coverage of numerous Derby prep races, themselves a critical component in deciding which horse(s) to back. "We cover all the contenders and all the excitement," said svp/GM *David Nathanson*. Now, you may ask, just what have I learned from the aforementioned content and sources? Well, plenty... I think. Moss and Nathanson are smitten with *Street Sense*, who may end up being the post time favorite. Moss also likes *Circular Quay* and *Curlin*, a horse that Nathanson calls "a rocket ship." All considered, here are 4 horses to seriously ponder: *Street Sense*, *Nobiz Like Shobiz*, *Scat Daddy* and *Hard Spun*. Good Luck. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Koppel on Discovery: Living with Cancer," Sun, 8pm, **Discovery**. The title is literal, as this special's subject is 2 of the 10mln Americans living with the disease. The saga of Discovery's *Lance Armstrong* is profiled, but a more in-depth profile is done on *Koppel's* colleague *Leroy Sievers* as he confronts a much worse outcome than Armstrong's. Sievers, who shows no outward signs of cancer, describes the life of a cancer patient starkly and honestly. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Secret Lives of Women," Tues, 8pm, **WE tv**. The new season of this doc series begins well, with a look at polygamy, its practitioners and critics, some of whom work to extricate women and young children. Critics of polygamy estimate 35K Americans are engaged in it. And it's not a Utah problem: polygamy is practiced across more than 30 states. — "Beau Brummel," Sun, 8pm, **BBC America**. OK, it's a period piece about the period's most influential man of the cloth, the Prince of Wales' advisor on clothing and a rogue at that, but done extremely well. *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

(4/23/07-4/29/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	1.9	1773
1	TNT	1.9	1772
1	DSNY	1.9	1759
4	TOON	1.3	1217
4	FOXN	1.3	1191
6	ESPN	1.2	1138
6	NAN	1.2	1070
8	A&E	1.1	1049
8	LIFE	1.1	1032
8	TBSC	1.1	1001
8	FX	1.1	966
8	HALL	1.1	875
13	DISC	1	967
13	CORT	1	841
15	HGTV	0.9	840
15	SCIF	0.9	828
15	HIST	0.9	793
18	SPK	0.8	746
18	MTV	0.8	742
18	CMDY	0.8	736
18	TLC	0.8	694
22	FAM	0.6	594
22	AMC	0.6	564
22	FOOD	0.6	540
22	VH1	0.6	532
22	TVLD	0.6	521
27	CNN	0.5	509
27	BET	0.5	453
27	ESP2	0.5	449
27	MSNB	0.5	420
27	SOAP	0.5	280
32	APL	0.4	391
32	BRAV	0.4	369
32	EN	0.4	350
32	VS	0.4	265
32	NGC	0.4	262
32	WGNC	0.4	247
32	LMN	0.4	242
39	TTC	0.3	307
39	HLN	0.3	265
39	OXYG	0.3	233
39	TVGC	0.3	220
39	GSN	0.3	197
39	TDSN	0.3	195
39	SPD	0.3	184
39	DSCI	0.3	123

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney



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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## '80s Showers Brought Current Flowers

Al Gore can speak on myriad changes in global weather patterns over the last quarter-century, but nearly as much has changed over the same period at **The Weather Channel**, which celebrates its 25th Anniversary on May 2. Cable's version of the net before its '82 launch was a camera trained on a thermometer and a barometer, said **The Weather Channel** CEO *Deborah Wilson*, and the net had to travel through what amounted to a driving rainstorm to endure. "Cable was so nascent at the time that TV advertisers were really focused on broadcast networks. It was really hard for niche nets to get dollars," she said. "We almost had to shut our doors [around '86-'87]." Yet the net persisted with the help of 3 primary factors: early carriage by **Advance/Newhouse** and **Bresnan**, the implementation of local content, and the fact that weather affects everyone, everywhere, at all times. This beguiling nature of, well... nature, gave the net a much-needed foothold, but its embrace of new technologies and platforms added more boost. Since '94, Wilson has led a crusade to new media, and **The Weather Channel** has since established a marked online and wireless presence. "We are well distributed with all mobile carriers, with hundreds of different products," said Wilson. 1 interesting subscription phone product includes programmable alerts, through which customers can be informed if a tornado touches down in the vicinity or if the temperature falls below an established mark. Such services offer "lots of traction and allow us to be everywhere," said Wilson. Coinciding with an upcoming anniversary celebration will be the groundbreaking for a control center that will accelerate the net's HD transition. The upconversion of net signals to HD will commence in Sept, before the center is completed in Jan and the net goes all HD next summer. Just another advancement for **The Weather Channel**, which continues its march, rain or shine. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Brando." Tues, Wed, 8pm, **TCM**. We're usually not fans of 2-part documentaries, but we'll admit that there aren't many wasted minutes in this portrait of the work and life of Brando. Our only quibble, at least at the beginning, is that there are more talking heads telling us how great Brando was than footage of him being so. Eventually we get clips, and they're great—particularly Brando in "Julius Caesar." *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Helmut by June," Mon, 7pm, **Cinemax**. Move this doc up to "highlights" if you're a fan of *Cindy Crawford*, *Claudia Schiffer* and other supermodels. We see *Helmut Newton* taking a lot of pictures of Cindy and Claudia in their prime, so it's hard to complain about such visuals. But there's not much more. The filmmaker is June, his wife. When she narrates (sounding like *Jeanne Moreau* in "The Lover"), it's interesting; when Newton's on screen, it's self serving. — "Perfect Housewives," Wed, 9pm, **BBC America**. Tongue-in-cheek reality show about a neat housewife trying to reform a pair of sloppy ones. While some good tips are provided, haven't we seen this many, many times before? **BBC A** usually provides ground-breaking programming. Not this time. *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

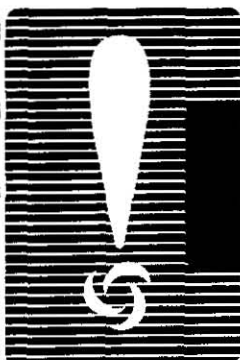
(4/16/07-4/22/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2.1	1883
2	USA	2	1814
3	TNT	1.6	1525
4	FOXN	1.5	1411
5	ESPN	1.4	1342
6	DISC	1.2	1148
6	CNN	1.2	1105
6	TBSC	1.2	1094
6	A&E	1.2	1086
6	TOON	1.2	1081
6	LIFE	1.2	1069
12	NAN	1.1	1034
13	SPK	1	882
13	FX	1	881
13	HALL	1	799
16	HGTV	0.9	867
16	TVLD	0.9	840
16	CORT	0.9	826
16	TLC	0.9	822
16	HIST	0.9	801
16	SCIF	0.9	785
22	FAM	0.8	714
22	CMDY	0.8	710
24	VH1	0.7	665
24	MTV	0.7	611
26	AMC	0.6	587
26	FOOD	0.6	545
26	BET	0.6	530
29	MSNB	0.5	456
29	CMT	0.5	433
29	APL	0.5	416
29	LMN	0.5	271
33	ESP2	0.4	393
33	BRAV	0.4	378
33	EN	0.4	371
33	HLN	0.4	360
33	TTC	0.4	318
33	WGNC	0.4	261
33	OXYG	0.4	259
33	SOAP	0.4	246
33	NGC	0.4	243
42	VS	0.3	229
42	SPD	0.3	200
42	GSN	0.3	190
42	TDSN	0.3	154
42	DSCI	0.3	149

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Off-Season Game Plan

My beloved **Washington Redskins** have managed for many years running to make blunder after blunder during the **NFL** draft. So as I pessimistically await next weekend's '07 version, I can't decide whether **NFL Net's** increased event coverage—this year will feature for the 1st time live reporting of the entire 2 days—is a positive or a negative. On my end, I fear the increased coverage will beget more potshots directed at my team, but for **NFL Net**, it's clearly a boon. It increases the relevancy of the net's off-season programming, now critical for a pair of key reasons: to satiate the booming news appetite of professional football fans and to prove its year-round importance to cable ops and other video platforms. "Clearly the draft is the biggest off-season NFL event," said **NFL Net** vp, programming **Charles Coplin**. "It's of paramount importance, but we also see it as complimentary to our coverage of the Senior Bowl, the scouting combine and the owner's meetings." Indeed, the foursome spotlights the 365 day/year business of the **NFL**, which typifies the net and its viewers. Outsiders may not understand why fans would want to watch league prospects lift weights, run sprints and strut around in spandex, but increasingly they do. "This year's combined numbers were out of sight," said **Coplin**. "If you're not watching the **NFL Network**, you're not seeing what coaches, scouts and GMs see." What viewers also may see is 33 hours of total draft coverage on multiple platforms, including on **Sprint** wireless phones and cable VOD, where the number of player profiles has increased 5-fold in just a few years, to 100. In the fight with veteran **ESPN** for draft eyeballs, **Coplin** believes the net's talent roster offers an advantage. "I feel very good about our coverage, and our talent is very strong," he said, particularly touting ex-players **Marshall Faulk** and **Deion Sanders**. Now if I could just get a few laudatory comments about the Redskins. **CH**

**Highlights:** "Planet Earth," finale, Sun, 8pm, **Discovery**, **Discovery HD**. We won't say this week's final ep **Caves** (9pm), which is preceded by **Forests** (8pm), is the best of the 11-part epic, but we could be convinced. We could also argue that **Caves** works equally well on **Earth Day**, this Sun, as it would on **Halloween**. **SA**

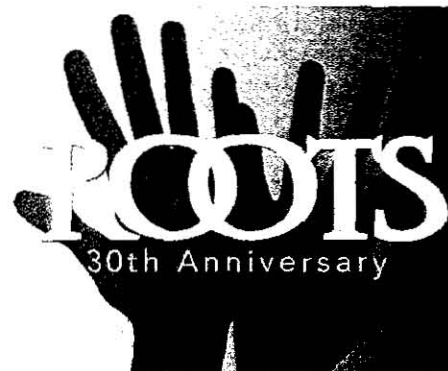
**Worth a Look:** "Cameron Diaz," Wed, 8pm ET, 9pm PT, **Biography Channel**. Next time you're looking to do a random act of kindness, think of **Chuck Russell**, the director who decided that a 21-year-old model with no acting experience could play **Jim Carrey's** love interest in "The Mask" ('94). Thus, after 12 auditions and an ulcer was born the acting career of **Cameron Diaz**. Implications for your business? — "Cheerleader U," season finale, Wed, 10pm ET, **WE tv**. There's no crying in baseball, but there's plenty in cheerleading. — "A Life Interrupted," Mon, 9pm **Lifetime**. One of the best cause films **Lifetime's** done. Recounts story of a woman whose story helped clear the backlog of untested rape kits. The bigger story: How could Congress allow such a backlog to occur? — "Wife, Mom, Bounty Hunter," Fri, 9pm, **WE tv**. Interesting move by **WE tv**, seeking to tap into an audience interested in a pistol-packing mamas. A moderately entertaining series. **SA**

## Basic Cable Rankings (4/09/07-4/15/07)

### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.3	2097
2	DSNY	1.9	1690
3	TNT	1.6	1506
4	FOXN	1.4	1277
5	LIFE	1.2	1157
5	DISC	1.2	1096
5	A&E	1.2	1076
5	NAN	1.2	1067
9	TOON	1.1	1057
9	FX	1.1	969
9	HALL	1.1	821
9	TV1	1.1	395
13	TBSC	1	960
13	CORT	1	890
13	SCIF	1	865
16	VH1	0.9	836
16	HGTV	0.9	826
16	ESPN	0.9	818
16	CMDY	0.9	817
16	HIST	0.9	815
16	FAM	0.9	793
16	MTV	0.9	786
23	SPK	0.8	758
23	TVLD	0.8	746
23	TLC	0.8	742
26	CNN	0.7	696
26	FOOD	0.7	637
26	AMC	0.7	597
29	BET	0.6	493
30	ESP2	0.5	462
30	MSNB	0.5	447
30	APL	0.5	410
30	BRAV	0.5	401
30	LMN	0.5	280
35	EN	0.4	401
35	TTC	0.4	347
35	HLN	0.4	345
35	SOAP	0.4	255
35	NGC	0.4	233
40	TWC	0.3	311
40	CMT	0.3	237
40	TVGC	0.3	230
40	OXYG	0.3	228
40	TDSN	0.3	194
40	GSN	0.3	174
40	DSCI	0.3	141

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney



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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Wishing on a New Star

**Starz'** initial foray into original programming begins Wed (11pm) with "Head Case," a hilarious program featuring *Alexandra Wentworth* as an irreverent therapist trying to "help" some of Hollywood's elite. *Jason Priestley* and *Andy Dick*—who grapple with the tongue-in-cheek problems of repressed homosexuality and prescription drug abuse, respectively—join *Tom Sizemore*, singer *Alanis Morissette* and others as recurring characters in the largely extemporaneous show. The lack of a full script "gives a feeling of danger because the characters don't know where they are going," said Starz svp, programming *Stephan Shelanski*. The guest patients are told of the basic theme to be explored, he said, but *Wentworth* is free to employ any tactic, like when she attempts to lure from *Priestley* an admission of male attraction by having a pair of dolls copulate. No doubt comics will broach similar subject matter during "Martin Lawrence presents 1st Amendment Stand-up," which with "Head Case" and "The Bronx Bunny Show" forms an hour-long block of comedy originals that will air on Starz for 10 weeks. "Comedy is a better entry point into originals because it offers subscribers something to break the pace of movies, and content in smaller pieces," said *Shelanski*. As "The Bronx Bunny Show" chronicles 2 puppets who host a fictitious talk show with real guests such as *Howie Mandel*, the new block should help with the net's transition to originals by "building on our movie history" through the participation of movie stars in all 3 series, said *Shelanski*. And more original content is forthcoming. 4 additional comedic series will bow in '08, he said, with serious dramas to follow in later years. "We're committed to slowly building original content and providing viewers an alternative to movies," said *Shelanski*. *Wentworth*, meanwhile, is committed to making viewers laugh. *CH*

**Highlights:** "The Sopranos," Sun, 9pm, **HBO**. Ep 1 moved slowly—maybe. This week's, focusing on Mr J. Sacrimoni and budding film director Chris Moltisanti (whose oeuvre upsets Carmela), is a classic. -- "Man Among Wolves," Mon, 9pm, **Nat Geo**. An amazing story. Never mind "Dances with Wolves." *Shaun Ellis* lives with them. He teaches babies, rejected by their mother, to hunt, defend and howl (honest). *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Big Ideas for a Small Planet," Tues, 9pm, **Sundance**. From wolves to *Joel Woolf*, the intelligent mechanic who converts diesel engines to run on vegetable oil [see our green video at [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)]. This slightly biased short doc inaugurates weekly environmental bloc "The Green," putting *Larry Aiderm* & green celeb *Robert Redford* ahead of the crowd. -- "Staircase Murder," Sun, 8pm, **Lifetime**. We watched this re-telling of the *Michael Peterson* case not knowing that music will be added at broadcast. Without a soundtrack the film seemed like a documentary, entirely appropriate to recount a murder case. It was great to see *Kevin Pollak* in fine form as Peterson's lawyer. Handsome *Treat Williams* is the perfect choice to play someone trying to act as if he's innocent. -- "Head Case," Wed, 11pm, **Starz**. Terrific vignettes about an inappropriate therapist to the stars. See above essay. [More reviews, including GSN's National Vocabulary Championship, at: [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)] *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

(4/02/07-4/08/07)

Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	1.8	1595
2	TNT	1.7	1615
3	USA	1.6	1528
4	TOON	1.3	1165
4	FOXN	1.3	1158
4	TBSC	1.3	1156
7	DISC	1.2	1148
8	NAN	1.1	1044
8	ESPN	1.1	1031
8	A&E	1.1	1014
8	CORT	1.1	926
8	HALL	1.1	861
13	FAM	1	936
13	LIFE	1	911
13	SPK	1	901
16	FX	0.9	837
16	SCIF	0.9	835
16	HIST	0.9	816
16	VH1	0.9	812
16	HGTV	0.9	800
16	MTV	0.9	788
16	CMDY	0.9	777
23	AMC	0.8	763
23	TVLD	0.8	689
25	TLC	0.7	655
25	BET	0.7	559
27	FOOD	0.6	509
27	LMN	0.6	324
29	CNN	0.5	499
29	APL	0.5	437
29	ESP2	0.5	436
29	BRAV	0.5	421
29	NGC	0.5	291
34	MSNB	0.4	387
34	EN	0.4	337
34	TTC	0.4	327
34	WGNC	0.4	269
34	SOAP	0.4	254
34	TV1	0.4	145
40	HLN	0.3	311
40	TWC	0.3	240
40	OXYG	0.3	222
40	TVGC	0.3	220
40	TDSN	0.3	182
40	GSN	0.3	180
40	DSCI	0.3	127

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

## CableFAX databriefs



**CableFAX databriefs** is a weekly html newsletter delivered every Monday via email to qualified subscribers. Published by the well-respected **CableFAX Daily** editorial team, **CableFAX databriefs** is an extension of its sister publication and spotlights vital industry metrics for broadband operators.

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

### A New/Old Frontier for the BBC

**BBC America** announced this week a restructured programming schedule and a renewed content focus, leaving the latter portion of its moniker accurate in geography only. Henceforth the net will spotlight British content exclusively, and 7-day programming blocks were instituted to streamline genres. "We want to modernize British programming and try to downplay the bonnets and horses" view that has plagued it in the US, said **BBC Worldwide America** pres **Garth Ancier**. Equally important going forward will be the genre blocks, Ancier said, because when he took the post in early Feb the net's "publicist couldn't figure out what was on every night, and I couldn't either." Also helping to spur the changes were industry colleagues, who while speaking with Ancier expressed concern over the net's haphazard and confusing schedule—in spite of which the net ranked as a favorite digital basic cable net in an '06 **Beta** study. Interestingly viewers weren't polled about the changes, mainly because Ancier wanted them implemented in time for this week's **Discovery** upfront (*Discovery* handles distribution and ad sales for the net). Still, past experiences with **Fox**, **CNN** and **NBC** instill confidence that the alterations will only serve to increase viewership, said Ancier. Every night (8-10pm) on BBC America now has a name, including "Murder Monday," "Crime Scene Friday" and "Supernatural Saturday," the 3 most intuitive block titles. Also included is Ancier's favorite "Wicked Wednesday," offering the ribald "Footballers Wive\$" and "Hotel Babylon." Of the night's programming, Ancier said "it's not the most high-brow but it is fun." Off-air, BBC America will continue to add co-production credits to American content, adding to **ABC**'s "Dancing with the Stars" and **HBO**'s "Rome." 3 scripted pilots are underway for **CBS**, including a comedic drama. **CH**

**Highlights:** "The Sopranos," Sun, 9pm and "Entourage," 10pm, **HBO**. This could be the best Sunday night in recent cable history, what with the return of these excellent series, plus ep 2 of "The Tudors" (**Showtime**, 10pm) and 2 installments of **Discovery Channel/Discovery HD**'s "Planet Earth" (begins @ 8pm). Sopranos creator *David Chase*, a master, sprinkles possible finale material throughout eps 1 & 2 as the ultimate countdown for "The Sopranos" begins. The tension is so excruciating that a hard belch by Tony spurs alarm, as does a hair-raising story about mother. There are less-serious raisings on "Entourage," as Vince's neurotic agent Ari has been replaced by Amanda (*Carla Gugino*). While this radically changes Entourage's frat house atmosphere, Amanda's addition is handled deftly. Speaking of deft (or is that daft?), a salute to *Kevin Dillon* as Drama for making life as a D-lister such fun.

**Worth a Look:** "PainKiller Jane," Fri, 10pm, **Sci Fi**. It's a dark, dark world that Jane (*Kristanna Loken*) inhabits, but when the writing is on, this series sizzles. — "America's Cutest Puppies," Sat, 9pm, **WE tv**. Remember The Puppy Channel, the televised parking space featuring nothing but frolicking puppies and sweet music? Doggone it, this 10-ep contest is so much more, and surely will grab eyeballs. [For more reviews, including *Jaclyn Smith's* Shear Genius, visit [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)] **SA**

#### Basic Cable Rankings

(3/26/07-4/01/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.2	2021
2	DSNY	1.9	1721
3	TNT	1.5	1367
4	FOXN	1.4	1289
4	TBSC	1.4	1288
6	TOON	1.3	1166
6	NAN	1.3	1164
8	DISC	1.2	1122
8	A&E	1.2	1072
10	LIFE	1.1	1027
10	CORT	1.1	951
12	ESPN	1	961
12	FX	1	956
12	HALL	1	778
15	CMDY	0.9	852
15	HGTV	0.9	833
15	HIST	0.9	825
15	FAM	0.9	790
19	ESP2	0.8	754
19	SCIF	0.8	746
19	SPK	0.8	737
19	TVLD	0.8	702
19	AMC	0.8	684
24	MTV	0.7	647
24	TLC	0.7	633
26	CNN	0.6	575
26	FOOD	0.6	552
26	VH1	0.6	539
26	BET	0.6	505
26	LMN	0.6	320
31	APL	0.5	437
31	BRAV	0.5	426
31	MSNB	0.5	402
31	NGC	0.5	306
31	SOAP	0.5	270
36	EN	0.4	397
36	TTC	0.4	376
36	HLN	0.4	362
36	WGNC	0.4	280
40	CMT	0.3	246
40	TWC	0.3	237
40	TVGC	0.3	224
40	OXYG	0.3	205
40	SPD	0.3	198
40	GSN	0.3	180
40	TDSN	0.3	172

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

Free Webcast

## Switched Digital Video: Lessons from System-Wide Production Deployments

**BigBand Networks** and **Communications Technology** are presenting a free Webcast on switched digital video. This Webcast will focus on the maturation of switched digital video including tips that cable operator employees have learned from the field.

#### Panelists:

**Paul Brooks**, Senior Network Architect, Time Warner Cable

**Biren Sood**, Vice President and Manager of Cable Video Americas, BigBand Networks

Thursday, April 19; 8 a.m. PST, 11 a.m. EST, 4 p.m. GMT

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Rated 'F' For Freedom

IFC's original doc "This Film Is Not Yet Rated" (Mar 31, 11pm ET) effectively opens viewers' eyes—and the legs of *Maria Bello* and *Sharon Stone*—to the opacity and inconsistency that has plagued for years the MPAA, which many in Hollywood feel has always coddled the major film studios' interests. It's particularly enlightening with regard to the US movie rating protocol, itself outdated, extremely self-serving and biased, and the only like process in the world that refuses to divulge the identities of the reviewers involved. Since it logically follows that film producers outside the sphere of major studio influence have sustained the brunt of the MPAA's seemingly duplicitous actions, enter IFC. "This film is the embodiment of the network; free expression is what we're all about," said IFC evp/GM *Evan Shapiro*. "The independent film has not been given the same kind of input into how the [ratings] rules are made, and has not been involved in the process." Due in part to the thrust of the doc (the 1st project Shapiro greenlit at the net), the MPAA has increased transparency with an outreach and education campaign. And perhaps the doc's finest achievement is that it helped alter a formerly steadfast MPAA rule, as precedent citation in ratings appeals is now permitted. "It's a new era in which artistic freedom is rising," said Shapiro. Playing to the imperative of 1st Amendment rights, IFC is using the concept of individual liberty to drive its original content. In the offing is "The Henry Rollins Show" (Apr), featuring the outspoken musician/actor in a debate-style talk show, and doc trilogy "Indie Sex" (July), which explores sex on the silver screen. Both will challenge viewers to be freer and to question the mainstream, said Shapiro, much like "This Film Is Not Yet Rated" has done. The collective result is a new direction for IFC. "The season to free expression starts this weekend," he said. CH

**Highlights:** "The Tudors," Sun, 10pm, **Showtime**. While the initial 2 eps, already online, are gorgeously shot, well acted and masterfully complex, they're not "Masterpiece Theater." Thank goodness, since Showtime's marketing pushes its most expensive series as one loaded with concupiscence. The opening 2 eps aren't overly carnal, but that Boleyn character has barely emerged yet. — "The Shield," Tues, season 6 premiere, 10pm, **FX**. The penultimate season's eps are more energetic and focused, and CCH Pounder is captain now, giving the actress additional camera time and allowing her to bring new depth to the character. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Jerry Seinfeld: The Comedian Award," Sun, 9pm, **HBO**. An entertaining 90 mins, particularly because *Gary Shandling* is on hand, as he, *Chris Rock* and *Robert Klein* fawn over Jerry. — "Cat-Minster," Sun, 7pm ET, **GSN**. A broadening of the network for games, but highly entertaining, particularly for those not exposed to feline fanatics. Besides profiles of cats and owners at a competition, the interstitials facts from **Purina**, are fun, too. Who knew cats with white fur are subject to sunburn? — "Family Jewels," Sun, 9:30pm, **A&E**. Kiss fans haven't lived until they've seen *Gene Simmons* in a surgical gown, cap and socks as he's prepped for a facelift. [More reviews, including a video look at *Wrestlemania*, Friday at [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)] SA

### Basic Cable Rankings

(3/19/07-3/25/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.1	1957
2	DSNY	1.8	1636
3	TNT	1.5	1393
4	TBSC	1.4	1307
4	DISC	1.4	1261
4	FOXN	1.4	1237
4	FX	1.4	1233
8	NAN	1.2	1125
8	TOON	1.2	1109
8	FAM	1.2	1077
8	CORT	1.2	1048
8	HALL	1.2	888
13	A&E	1.1	1059
13	LIFE	1.1	1033
13	CMDY	1.1	973
16	ESPN	0.9	853
16	HGTV	0.9	813
16	HIST	0.9	791
16	MTV	0.9	789
20	SPK	0.8	766
20	SCIF	0.8	743
20	FOOD	0.8	734
23	TLC	0.7	675
23	VH1	0.7	674
23	AMC	0.7	650
23	TVLD	0.7	649
27	ESP2	0.6	559
27	CNN	0.6	532
27	BET	0.6	486
30	APL	0.5	433
30	BRAV	0.5	393
30	NGC	0.5	305
30	SOAP	0.5	279
30	LMN	0.5	269
35	HLN	0.4	400
35	MSNB	0.4	390
35	TTC	0.4	344
35	OXYG	0.4	287
39	EN	0.3	298
39	CMT	0.3	255
39	WGNC	0.3	244
39	TVGC	0.3	235
39	TDSN	0.3	203
39	GSN	0.3	179
39	BIO	0.3	109
46	CNBC	0.2	217

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

THE CABLE SHOW



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MOBILE

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Pictures Just Aren't the Same

When it comes to *Albin and Melanie Ulle*, jealousy has zapped my pragmatism and stolen my sense of reason. The couple from Denver was chosen to embark on an enviable **Travel Channel** odyssey—truly a trip-of-a-lifetime—and I am inconsolable that I didn't land the gig. They explored more than 13 breathtaking locales around the globe, including Nepal, Peru and Australia, and their experiences will be documented in the net's "1,000 Places to See Before You Die" (Mar 29, 9pm), a series inspired by *Patricia Schultz's* eponymous travel book. Schultz helped hammer out the itinerary, and the non-professional "hosts" were selected to give viewers a more visceral experience. "It is really something to see these places through the eyes of someone who's never seen it before," said Travel Channel pres *Pat Younge*. "You really do get that wow factor." Even more exclamations are educed from the 1st ep, in which the Ulles travel throughout Alaska. Traversing glaciers, riding white-knuckled on a dog-pulled vehicle, and observing Orca whales in their natural habitat are just a sample of the featured adventures. Through it all, the likable pair (damn them!) lends credence to Younge's point by providing unvarnished reactions and uneducated inquiries. It's real people along for an oh-so-real ride, and all the footage was shot in HD. "There are so many moments you can't capture with pros," said Younge, who noted the trip's "profound, life-changing experiences." The net is augmenting the linear series with online content, including travel videos, interviews and a community for those afflicted with wanderlust. A sweepstakes lets viewers text on-screen codes shown during eps for a chance at \$50K and feeding their own excursionist dreams. You can bet I'll be texting like a madman. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Rome," series finale, Sun, 9pm, **HBO**. One thing's certain, with the possible exception of "Six Feet Under," you can't accuse HBO of waiting too long to pull the plug on series. While its finale doesn't rival *Six Feet's* memorable music video coda, "Rome" ends well, if a bit sadly, as death claims kings and common folk, and blood flows in Antony's palace in Egypt and in the nondescript Roman hills as Vorenus and Pullo take their last journey together. *SA*

**Worth A Look:** "Cheerleader U," Wed, 10pm, **WE tv**. The camerawork in eps 1&2 of this 6-parter illustrates the physicality of co-ed college cheerleading, but little else. Are good cheerleaders made or born? Perhaps the next 4 eps will illuminate (more depth on **CMT's** Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader vehicle "Making the Team," which fortunately was renewed). If **ABC Family's** original "Bring It On—All or Nothing" (Sun, 8pm), starring *Hayden Panettiere* (oh, the irony), answers that question, it'll be news to us. **ABC F** didn't send preview screeners. — "Acceptable TV," Fri, 10pm, **VH1**. Jack Black's clever spin on user generated content, as viewers watch (on TV or online) 3-min shorts, including a user generated entry. The top vote getters return. The shorts from Black's *Acceptable TV* crew were amusing. *SA* [More reviews, including **Lifetime's** "The Party Never Stops," at [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)]

### Basic Cable Rankings

(3/12/07-3/18/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.1	1929
2	DSNY	2	1809
3	TNT	1.5	1382
4	TBSC	1.3	1224
4	TOON	1.3	1179
4	FOXN	1.3	1169
4	NAN	1.3	1168
8	A&E	1.2	1116
8	LIFE	1.2	1101
8	FX	1.2	1072
8	HALL	1.2	925
12	CORT	1.1	989
13	DISC	1	967
13	SPK	1	932
13	AMC	1	905
13	HGTV	1	900
17	HIST	0.9	859
17	SCIF	0.9	838
17	ESPN	0.9	799
17	MTV	0.9	785
21	CMDY	0.8	773
21	FAM	0.8	740
21	TVLD	0.8	688
21	BET	0.8	634
25	TLC	0.7	665
25	FOOD	0.7	634
27	VH1	0.6	584
27	CNN	0.6	579
29	BRAV	0.5	466
29	MSNB	0.5	405
29	NGC	0.5	336
29	SOAP	0.5	293
29	LMN	0.5	289
34	APL	0.4	397
34	HLN	0.4	393
34	ESP2	0.4	370
34	EN	0.4	367
34	TTC	0.4	353
39	CMT	0.3	252
39	TVGC	0.3	243
39	OXYG	0.3	242
39	WGNC	0.3	238
39	SPD	0.3	226
39	GSN	0.3	205
39	TDSN	0.3	193
39	DHLT	0.3	187

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein**Addictive TV**

There's something about watching a young man inject drugs with a needle that heightens the tableau's enormity. That the drug is OxyContin, a pain-killing opiate wielding twice the strength of Morphine, piles on the surrealism, too, in a way that a marijuana joint or a highball just can't match. This perception crumbles, however, when faced with a truthful, raw and painfully real program like A&E's "Intervention" (Fri, 10pm). "This show is resonant because it touches all levels of society," said A&E svp, non-fiction and alternative programming Robert Sharenow. "Addiction can be absolutely crippling to all involved." Alcohol, amphetamines, bulimia, it doesn't matter. Addiction ravages without prejudice. To this end, the show has profiled in its 2 seasons all types of people and all manners of addiction. And Ryan, the above-referenced OxyContin addict featured in the show's 3rd season premiere, joins other addicts in so riveting net audiences that "Intervention" is now A&E's 2nd most popular series in HH delivery and the coveted adult 25-54 demo. "Our viewers really respond to emotional honesty and high-level drama," said Sharenow, who added that the series thrives despite minimal marketing. "This is really a labor of love for us here. We feel like this is a service show that exposes critical issues." Featured addicts are found through contact with treatment programs, information on the net's Website and increasingly from people reaching out to the show's braintrust. Addicts give consent to be filmed, but have no idea that an intervention will take place. Sometimes additional yet equally important storylines arise, as in Ryan's case when his stepfather is confronted about his own powerlessness against alcohol. The emotion displayed is haunting, and the feeling is only intensified by an end result that includes Ryan's ouster from 2 rehab centers. Only so many chances are afforded when your entire existence is controlled by an insidious substance. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Galapagos," Sun, 8pm, **Nat Geo**. When some of your subs think of National Geographic Channel they most likely ruminate on great photography of exotic places. That's the basis of this delicious 3-course meal, with a bit of an ecological message for dessert. -- "This American Life," Thurs, 10:30pm, **Showtime**. Good for *Bob Greenblatt* and Showtime, proving they can expand their scope beyond Hollywood with this series of quirky, semi-doc stories about ordinary people. What was that old tagline? No Limits? -- "Intervention," Fri, new season premiere, 10pm, **A&E**. Brutally compelling [see essay above]. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "The Whitest Kids U'Know," Tues, 11pm ET, **fuse**. This sketch comedy series will not be to everyone's taste, but it's fine for the young males who bond with fuse nightly. But it's not a respite from music videos. In fact, Whitest's best shtick is its music video parodies. -- "Style Inn," Tues, 10:30pm, **Oxygen**. We'll tune in just to find out: 1. Why *Tori Spelling*'s dad left her only \$800K? 2. Why *Tori* must liquidate the contents of her home to pay for the wine country inn that she and hubby *Dean McDermott* plan to open? 3. Why *Oxygen* thinks America wants to watch *Tori*'s ultrasound? *SA* [More reviews and a preview of *Entourage*'s new season at [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)]

**Basic Cable Rankings**

(3/05/07-3/11/07)

**Mon-Sun Prime**

1	USA	2.1	1983
2	DSNY	2	1800
3	TNT	1.5	1417
4	FOXN	1.4	1254
5	TBSC	1.3	1162
5	TOON	1.3	1149
7	LIFE	1.2	1156
7	ESPN	1.2	1115
7	A&E	1.2	1107
7	HALL	1.2	940
11	NAN	1.1	1036
11	CORT	1.1	988
13	SPK	1	960
13	FX	1	938
13	HIST	1	909
13	AMC	1	900
13	HGTV	1	887
18	DISC	0.9	848
18	MTV	0.9	845
18	SCIF	0.9	789
18	TVLD	0.9	778
22	TLC	0.8	758
22	CMDY	0.8	738
22	VH1	0.8	710
22	FAM	0.8	690
26	CNN	0.7	612
27	FOOD	0.6	545
27	BET	0.6	531
29	APL	0.5	450
29	ESP2	0.5	425
29	MSNB	0.5	409
29	BRAV	0.5	405
29	NGC	0.5	336
29	SOAP	0.5	294
29	LMN	0.5	276
36	EN	0.4	399
36	TTC	0.4	395
36	HLN	0.4	362
36	WGNC	0.4	295
36	GSN	0.4	239
41	CMT	0.3	276
41	TVGC	0.3	228
41	CNBC	0.3	228
41	OXYG	0.3	199
41	TDSN	0.3	198
41	SPD	0.3	194

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Can You See Me Now?

A reiteration of public broadcasters' Spanish-language multicast network Viva TV launched Mon under a new moniker, **V-me**, derived from the Spanish word "verme," meaning see me. The rebranded digital net, a partnership between private investors and public broadcasters, now hits 28mln cable homes in 18 US cities, including L.A., NYC, Chicago and Miami, and expects to add a dozen additional markets and satellite distribution within 1 year. "There was a strong sense [from focus groups] that Latinos are seen as a monolithic group, and are not appreciated for their intellectual curiosity or their educational aspirations," said net pres *Carmen DiRienzo*. "V-me respects where people are from, but it's also about where they are and where they are going." Focus groups also prompted the net's decision to offer Spanish-language programming in lieu of English-language content targeting Latinos, a la **Si TV**. Research showed that two-thirds of US Latinos are either bilingual or Spanish-language dominant, said DiRienzo, and exhibited an underlying belief that "the preservation of Spanish language is part of preserving Latino culture." As for competitors such as **Si TV**, **Galavision**, **MTV Tr3s** and others, DiRienzo is conscious of them but not worried. "There is a lot more room in the market for real diversity programming," she said. The net's offerings are organized into 4 distinct segments: kids, lifestyle, factual, and movies and specials. 36 hours/week are devoted to programming for preschoolers, 1 movie airs daily, and "Viva Voz," a nightly interview show with various hosts and celebrities delving into Latino themes, is the net's flagship program. The content mission is two-fold: build on existing production of originals and partner with well-known content providers. **BBC** and **Nat Geo** are already on board, and **Food Net** recently agreed to collaborate on a 1-hr, net-branded programming block to air Mon-Fri. The **V-me.tv** site will complement linear programs as it tries to build community among viewers. Viewers that want to be seen. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Decoding the Dead Sea Scrolls," Sun 9pm, **Nat Geo**. Interesting review of the oldest biblical texts, and how computer tech is extending their life, 60 years after their discovery. -- "Life Support," Sat, 8pm, **HBO**. Besides spotlighting addiction in this 1st installment in HBO's multi-platform project, the film has extraordinarily truthful-sounding dialogue and an excellent ensemble, including *Queen Latifah*. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "The Riches," Mon, 10pm, **FX**. In a world of formulaic episodic television, "The Riches" is anything but. Its pilot rivals HBO's upcoming "John From Cincinnati" as among the strangest TV we've seen this year. Mea culpa: we're vamping here as we try to make sense of this piece about a grifter family, although admittedly it's entertaining to watch *Minnie Driver* playing a southern scoundrel, and *Shannon Marie Woodward* as Di Di Malloy is excellent. -- "Kings of South Beach," Mon, 9pm, **A&E**. The network's attempt to lure fans of "The Sopranos" begins well but suffers a bit after true identities are revealed. -- "Cain & Abel," Sun, 10pm, **Nat Geo**. A little hokey, but becomes interesting some 20 minutes in, expanding on the fratricidal tale. *SA* [More reviews, including *Jon Stewart* on TV Land, at [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)]

### Basic Cable Rankings

(2/26/07-3/04/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.2	2042
2	DSNY	2	1817
3	TNT	1.8	1701
4	FOXN	1.4	1313
5	TBSC	1.3	1181
6	LIFE	1.2	1134
6	TOON	1.2	1119
6	A&E	1.2	1107
6	HALL	1.2	903
10	DISC	1.1	1040
10	ESPN	1.1	994
10	CORT	1.1	971
13	HIST	1	956
13	NAN	1	953
13	SPK	1	883
16	MTV	0.9	824
16	HGTV	0.9	798
16	AMC	0.9	795
16	CMDY	0.9	794
16	FX	0.9	778
16	TVLD	0.9	774
22	FAM	0.8	758
22	SCIF	0.8	739
24	CNN	0.7	677
25	TLC	0.6	598
25	NGC	0.6	366
27	VH1	0.5	497
27	FOOD	0.5	480
27	APL	0.5	452
27	EN	0.5	424
27	BET	0.5	409
27	BRAV	0.5	392
27	SOAP	0.5	311
27	LMN	0.5	291
35	MSNB	0.4	397
35	ESP2	0.4	384
35	HLN	0.4	371
35	TTC	0.4	355
35	CMT	0.4	307
40	TWC	0.3	270
40	TVGC	0.3	248
40	CNBC	0.3	245
40	WGNC	0.3	235
40	OXYG	0.3	227
40	GSN	0.3	213
40	TDSN	0.3	203

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

THE CABLE SHOW

## Convergence Happens May 7-9

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May 7-9, 2007

Mandalay Bay Convention Center

Las Vegas, Nevada

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## (H)eed (I)ts (V)oice

Those involved with HBO's "Life Support" (Mar 10, 8pm) hope the film's strong voice and message impel people—particularly African Americans—to recognize the dangers and many causes of HIV. The **CDC** reports that African Americans aren't getting the message; half of those diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in '05 were black even though the ethnic group comprises just 12% of the US population. "The urgency couldn't be greater," said **Cable Positive** pres/CEO *Steve Villano*, who lauded the film's cogent thrust at a Tues screening at **NCTA's** headquarters. "This film will save a lot of lives. It's such a powerful teaching tool." Writer/dir *Nelson George* was inspired to embark on the project by his sister, who in '92 told him she had contracted HIV. "Having this virus woke her up in a profound way," George said. "Life doesn't end when you get the news." *Queen Latifah* plays her as a Brooklynite struggling to cope with HIV's toll on herself, her community and her family—all the while striving to educate people about the virus through community outreach. The film's casting is good and the performances decent, but its real achievement is a storyline that seamlessly integrates characters affected by the virus in myriad ways. Queen's character and her husband contracted HIV through needle-sharing, and now face scorn and distrust from a daughter as a result. A teenaged character whose mother passed the virus to him during pregnancy flirts with death. HIV-infected women of all ages are candid in support group scenes. And then there are the lesser-publicized realisms of people living with HIV: widespread health concerns, piles of medication, massive misunderstanding and malice from others. George does an excellent job of providing didacticism on an epidemic that is far too close to home. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Explorer: Aryan Brotherhood," Sun, 8pm, **Nat Geo**. This is mesmerizing television. How can it not be as it explores the ruthless, prison-based gang whose priorities seem to be criminal activity and profits—not white power. -- "Robin Hood," Sat, 9pm, ET, **BBC Am**. A new hood, indeed, whose arrow is aimed at various demos as it judiciously mixes modern convention with the tale's ancient elements for a resoundingly good romp. Evidence: In keeping with tradition, Maid Marian (*Lucy Griffiths*) is usually passive, but then there are the modern touches. In ep 1, Robin (*Jonas Armstrong*) tells Marian she'd be surprised how often his charm works on women. With perfect timing, Marian responds, "Amazed." -- "Battlestar Galactica," 10pm, Sun, **Sci Fi**. This ep, beginning a 4-part, season-ending arc, should sate fans who've been bellyaching for action in recent eps. But has Starbuck gone frakkin' nuts? *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Sacrifices of the Heart," Sat, 9pm, **Hallmark**. With predictions that Alzheimer's will overwhelm the U.S. health system, Hallmark gets props for producing a drama about the disease. Yes, it's a predictable tear-jerker but informative and heart-felt, as the script comes from Reagan daughter *Patti Davis*, and *Ken Howard's* performance was influenced by his own dad's battle with the disease. *SA* [More reviews, including **Discovery's** "The Lost Tomb of Jesus," at: [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)]

### Basic Cable Rankings (1/29/07-2/25/07) Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.2	1993
2	DSNY	2	1822
3	TNT	1.7	1582
4	LIFE	1.4	1293
4	FOXN	1.4	1282
4	TBSC	1.4	1274
7	A&E	1.3	1186
8	TOON	1.2	1108
8	CORT	1.2	924
10	NAN	1.1	989
10	HALL	1.1	825
12	ESPN	1	907
12	FX	1	891
14	HIST	0.9	852
14	HGTV	0.9	847
14	SPK	0.9	845
14	AMC	0.9	836
14	DISC	0.9	833
14	MTV	0.9	804
14	SCIF	0.9	786
14	CMDY	0.9	777
14	TVLD	0.9	765
23	FAM	0.8	756
23	TLC	0.8	691
25	CNN	0.7	659
25	VH1	0.7	607
27	FOOD	0.6	572
27	BET	0.6	470
27	SOAP	0.6	326
27	LMN	0.6	311
31	BRAV	0.5	443
31	MSNB	0.5	399
31	NGC	0.5	301
34	ESP2	0.4	397
34	APL	0.4	390
34	EN	0.4	377
34	HLN	0.4	360
34	TTC	0.4	343
34	CMT	0.4	333
34	WGNC	0.4	272
34	SPD	0.4	250
34	GSN	0.4	231
43	TWC	0.3	300
43	TVGC	0.3	240
43	OXYG	0.3	213

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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## BROADBAND

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Hungry For Viewers

What *Takeru Kobayashi* and his counterparts can do is at once impressive and nauseating. The diminutive Japanese man is the best competitive eater among the 6K professionals registered with the **International Federation of Competitive Eating**, and an owner of several world records. Last year he inhaled 54 hot dogs in 12 minutes at the famous Nathan's Coney Island hot dog-eating contest and ate 58 brat sausages in 10 minutes in WI. While there was no word on subsequent stomach pains, **Spike** hopes for nothing but pleasure from a new programming deal with **Major League Eating**, the "sport's" world governing body. The 1st of 4 events will air Mar 17 (7pm) on the net, a "St. Patrick's Day Showdown" from Savannah, GA, where combatants will compare gastrointestinal fortitude in consuming corned beef and cabbage, beef tongue and green donuts. "If you see a guy eating a beef tongue, you are going to stop and watch," said Spike gm Kevin Kay. "We want to eventize competitive eating with good hooks and twists, and build fans' allegiance." The net's primarily young male audience will (pardon the pun) eat up these events, said Kay, because competition and food consumption typify the American man. To lure viewers to the initial event—and presumably before the franchise really gets cooking—Spike will air its wildly popular UFC battles. Kay also touts the involvement of MLE execs *George and Richard Shea*, who will host the event telecasts. "These guys are great promoters," he said. It's still unclear which of the roughly 100 annual MLE events will adorn the 3 remaining slots. Delicacies being considered (of course all in large amounts) include jalapenos, chili cheese fries, and soft pretzels. Great fun if competitive eating doesn't tie viewers' stomachs in knots. *CH*

**Highlights:** "A Distant Shore: African Americans and D-Day," Sat, 7pm, **History Channel**. This short special tells the often overlooked story of African-American soldiers' role in the D-Day Invasion, which your subs hear from the soldiers themselves, many of whom remain bitter. And the soldiers offer a description of the invasion, as combatants and African Americans, providing rare insight into the reality of war. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Spoons," Fri (tonight), 11pm ET, **BBC America**. This weekend's BBC America hype surrounds the finale of political thriller "The State Within" (Sun, 9pm ET, BBC A). While the last 2 hours outdo its first 2, the ending's a bit disappointing. That's why our pick is "Spoons," a sketch comedy debuting tonight. While not every Spoons sketch produces laughter, each is short, never overstaying its welcome—an element most comedy troupes don't understand. — "Women on Death Row II," Mon, 9pm, **WE**. Your subs will be torn between pitying these women and hating them for their crimes. — "Decoding Disaster," Wed, 10pm, **Discovery Times**. A slight departure for DT as it investigates crashes, explosions and natural disasters. *SA*

**Notable:** "Big Break VII: Reunion," Sun, 10pm ET, **Golf Channel**. Players from previous "Big Breaks" (including *Cfax* fave *Pam Garrity-Crikelair*) tee it up in Reunion, FL, of course. *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

(2/12/07-2/18/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.2	2004
2	DSNY	2.1	1919
3	USA	2	1860
4	TBSC	1.5	1403
5	FOXN	1.4	1311
6	A&E	1.3	1230
6	LIFE	1.3	1221
6	TOON	1.3	1163
6	CORT	1.3	988
10	SPK	1	941
10	AMC	1	894
10	ESPN	1	884
10	HALL	1	780
14	HIST	0.9	853
14	FX	0.9	844
14	DISC	0.9	829
14	HGTV	0.9	827
14	FAM	0.9	811
14	SCIF	0.9	799
14	CMDY	0.9	796
14	TVLD	0.9	769
22	NAN	0.8	744
22	MTV	0.8	734
22	CNN	0.8	711
22	TLC	0.8	694
26	VH1	0.7	650
27	FOOD	0.6	540
27	SOAP	0.6	360
27	LMN	0.6	306
30	BET	0.5	457
30	BRAV	0.5	447
30	HLN	0.5	422
30	MSNB	0.5	397
30	SPD	0.5	368
30	NGC	0.5	322
36	APL	0.4	378
36	EN	0.4	376
36	TWC	0.4	357

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## A Gorgeous Reality

VH1 struts out next week new reality series "The Agency" (Tues, 10pm), providing a peek into **Wilhelmina Modeling's** daily dealings with a most fickle and subjective commodity: flesh. As beautiful, poised men and women translate into a graceful bottom line, there's little time for niceties in the business of beauty. You're too short, too tall, too chunky, too ugly, and have bad skin and eyes that are too close together. That's just some of the brutal honesty exhibited by Wilhelmina staffers in the series' initial ep. But soon their nervous/demanding/opportunistic demeanors steal the (fashion) show. "We fell in love with the really big personalities [at the agency]," said VH1 svp, programming and production **Shelly Tatro**. "Most people only see the pretty side of the business, but we hope what people see are great characters, especially the agents." And they may even find out plausible answers to a tricky proposition: what makes a bankable body and face? But before you don your finest silks, apply makeup where necessary (OK, maybe not you, guys) and place every hair just so in hopes of slaying an audition, remember that this reality is most likely never going to be your reality. What it is, however, is part of VH1's recent focus on the reality TV genre, one that has paid off handsomely with smash hits such as "The Surreal Life" and "The Flavor of Love." The success of these series and all reality programming hinges on compelling characters and storylines, said Tatro, who admits that a dearth of both may hamper the reality TV juggernaut. "I'm actually surprised it's still working for everyone," she said. This new series pushes VH1's envelope, as it represents the net's 1st foray into reality content that doesn't feature household names. "We're hoping this opens new doors for us," Tatro said. While for some, a bright smile and a killer body open a lot more than doors. **CH**

**Highlights:** "Ghosts of Abu Ghraib," Thurs, 9:30pm, **HBO**. A brutal example of mob mentality and scathing indictment of **Donald Rumsfeld's** policy. — "Longford," Sat, 8pm, **HBO**. A tour de force for **Jim Broadbent** as a supreme if misguided humanitarian. **SA**

**Worth a Look:** "The Search for George Washington," Sat, 10pm, **History**. An interesting look at GW's looks, culled from a life mask, modern forensics and dentistry (don't bite on the legend of George's wooden teeth). The end products are rigorously researched life-size (Washington stood 6', 3" tall) models for a new museum at Mt Vernon. But things get a touch personal as we witness an investigation of the old man's breeches, for goodness sake, or when depictions of our country's father, unclothed, fill the screen. We're told the opposite sex liked president #1, and he reciprocated. Yep, nothing's sacred. — "The Agency" Tues, 9pm, **VH1**. This series about NY agents at the cut-throat **Wilhelmina Modeling** agency (see Heiges' review above) seems perfect for VH1. It's entertaining, and the weightiest "issues" are pure flesh as aspiring models must shed or gain pounds. Agent Becky is a reality series creator's dream—a peripatetic, potty-mouthed Brit with the warmth of a snowstorm. Oh, and did we mention a surfeit of toned anorexics in swimsuits? **SA** [More reviews at [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)]

### Basic Cable Rankings

(2/05/07-2/11/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.2	1980
2	DSNY	2.1	1847
3	LIFE	1.5	1370
3	FOXN	1.5	1326
5	TNT	1.4	1329
5	TBSC	1.4	1260
7	NAN	1.3	1198
8	A&E	1.2	1118
8	TOON	1.2	1072
8	CORT	1.2	893
11	ESPN	1.1	1016
11	HALL	1.1	829
13	AMC	1	909
13	SPK	1	905
15	HGTV	0.9	853
15	DISC	0.9	827
15	FX	0.9	802
15	HIST	0.9	793
15	CMDY	0.9	792
15	MTV	0.9	777
15	SCIF	0.9	765
15	TVLD	0.9	762
23	CNN	0.8	719
23	TLC	0.8	698
23	FAM	0.8	698
26	FOOD	0.7	627
27	BET	0.6	495
27	NGC	0.6	362
27	SOAP	0.6	328
27	LMN	0.6	298
31	VH1	0.5	493
31	BRAV	0.5	450
31	MSNB	0.5	431
34	APL	0.4	401
34	ESP2	0.4	394
34	EN	0.4	392
34	HLN	0.4	368
34	TTC	0.4	330
34	CMT	0.4	294
34	WGNC	0.4	251
34	GSN	0.4	243
42	TVGC	0.3	259
42	TWC	0.3	249
42	SPD	0.3	210
42	OXYG	0.3	194
42	TDSN	0.3	188

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## We Will Not Exhibit A Lie

The headline's play on American mythology relates to History Channel's "Save Our History: The Search for George Washington" (Feb 17, 10pm) on intriguing levels. What characterized the 1st US president at his early ages, and what did he look like? Is perhaps the founding father's most iconic image—the \$1 bill—a truly precise representation? The net's captivating program chronicles a 2-year research project to ascertain the true look of the 1st US president at ages 19, 45, and 57, with the goal of accurately depicting GW in a new exhibit at historic Mount Vernon. And the processes involved mirror what the net's programming is all about. "Our viewers are fascinated by the intersection of history and technology," said History's chief historian Libby O'Connell. "There's a sense of excitement, much like a detective show." Historians, forensic anthropologists and computer technicians from 4 continents helped uncover GW at pivotal stages: as a young surveyor full of ambition, as the commanding general of the Continental Army at Valley Forge, and as the new head of a fledgling and upstart nation. The team used computer imaging of historic sculptures to nail down facial features, examination of his clothes housed at the Smithsonian for exact proportions, even comparison of famous GW portraits to establish truthful renderings. Of course, most of what's left of the man is from his later years, and permission to access his Mount Vernon grave was denied. So producers relied on computer imaging and other high-tech methods to flesh out data from the unknown periods. Even Blueskin, 1 of GW's 2 horses, played an important part in the project. The results now stand sentry at the VA estate's museum, a stunning testament to the symbiosis between science, technology and history. "People were overwhelmed" by both the show and the completed project, said O'Connell, during a recent presentation. Net viewers will be, too. There is immeasurably more to GW than can be deduced from artwork and a greenback. CH

**Highlights:** "Nixon: A Presidency Revealed," Thurs, 8pm, **History**. Don't look for huge revelations, although the interviews with Al Haig and Alexander Butterfield are terrific. This is still excellent watching, especially for viewers younger than 35, because it's a terrifically even-handed look at a man and a presidency whose mention usually produces polarization. — "How to Eat Watermelon in White Company (and Enjoy It)," Thurs, 9pm ET, **IFC**. This doc proves *Melvin Van Peebles'* life story rivals that of *Robert Evans* for richness. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Wallis & Edward," Mon, 9pm ET, 10pm PT, **BBC A**. It's easy to see why the King of England would fall for Joely Richardson's Mrs Simpson. The film's production values, particularly its costumes, are gorgeous, too. — "Tim and Eric Awesome Show," Sun, 11:45pm, **Adult Swim**. The pilot ep that launches these 2 comedians' series didn't seemed far more original than funny, although at 11:45pm it might be. — "Kim Possible," 4th season premiere, Sat, 8pm, **Disney** and **Toon Disney**. Part of the Disney formula calls for spreading its stars around its properties, so we have the voice of "HS Musical's" Ashley Tisdale debuting on this hit cartoon series. SA

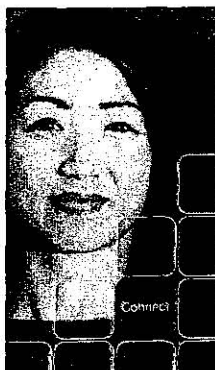
### Basic Cable Rankings

(1/29/07-2/4/07)

Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.1	1977
2	DSNY	1.9	1719
3	TNT	1.7	1591
4	LIFE	1.5	1421
5	A&E	1.4	1269
6	FOXN	1.3	1190
6	NAN	1.3	1161
8	TBSC	1.2	1144
8	TOON	1.2	1107
10	FX	1.1	983
10	CORT	1.1	874
10	HALL	1.1	848
13	HIST	1	946
13	HGTV	1	892
15	DISC	0.9	815
15	MTV	0.9	813
15	ESPN	0.9	810
15	SCIF	0.9	788
15	FAM	0.9	788
15	AMC	0.9	767
21	SPK	0.8	778
21	TLC	0.8	720
21	CMDY	0.8	717
21	TVLD	0.8	708
25	VH1	0.7	631
25	FOOD	0.7	607
25	LMN	0.7	354
28	CNN	0.6	548
28	BET	0.6	492
28	BRAV	0.6	490
31	CMT	0.5	436
31	APL	0.5	423
31	SOAP	0.5	287
34	MSNB	0.4	361
34	TTC	0.4	353
34	EN	0.4	350
34	ESP2	0.4	333
34	WGNC	0.4	295
34	NGC	0.4	257
34	GSN	0.4	241
41	TWC	0.3	306
41	TVGC	0.3	254
41	HLN	0.3	252
41	CNBC	0.3	237
41	OXYG	0.3	198

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney



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**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein**Doin' Time**

Nat Geo's trifecta of shows highlighting prison life (Feb 11) is wickedly good voyeuristic fun, transporting viewers to dangerous and violent worlds that most have never seen or experienced. Razor-wired societies suffused with gang-related stabbings via homemade weaponry, constant terror, drug use and even gassings, the throwing of feces and urine. Trust me: it's an awfully long way from suburbia. Nat Geo svp, special programming **Michael Cascio** agrees that the footage may prove surrealistic to most but insists that part of the appeal is the relatable issues of racial tension, class structure, and the drug trade. "Our momentum as a channel is growing because we take you inside places and cultures that mirror certain aspects of society," he said. "There is human nature in confinement, and the problems inside prisons reflect those on the outside." "Lockdown: Gang War" (8pm) highlights combustible racial tensions at Salinas Valley State Prison in CA, a facility so overcrowded that 120 inmates live together camp-style in a converted gym. It's a breeding ground for retaliatory violence—the prison sees 200 attacks per year—that results almost exclusively from gang generals' orders. Abiding by "house" rules and sticking with your own race increases the chances of survival at Salinas. Less gang-infested but equally brutal is CA's Valley State Prison for Women, featured in "Lockdown: Women Behind Bars" (9pm). CA doesn't segregate female cons by threat level as in male prisons, so bloody physicality is a daily peril at Valley State, too. Juxtapose this and a raging drug trade with 200 pregnant inmates, and what results is true surrealism. "Lockdown: Total Control" (10pm) spotlights NC's Alexander Correctional Institution—dubbed "hell" by inmates and which uses sophisticated technology to manage the violent population. All 3 prisons exhibit "issues that resonate," said Cascio. Thank goodness most will find such resonance vicarious. *CH*

**Highlights:** "FutureCar," Wed, 8pm, **Discovery**. Clever work by Jane Root's crew to mix Discovery's new (or renewed) push in science/tech with the interests of the "Monster Garage" & "American Chopper" set. This 4-pt series begins with "The Extremes" in terms of speed and design. Importantly, though, ep 1 also covers sensibility (a new type of taxicab) and safety (we loved the design that could make airbags redundant). *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Love is a 4-Letter Word," Sat, 9pm, **Hallmark**. Hallmark's all about love for Valentine's Day month and this predictable story of amour isn't bad, especially since it includes *Teri Polo* (aka Pamela Martha Focker). — "Nora Roberts' Montana Sky," Mon, 9pm, **Lifetime**. Like the first of this series ("Angels Fall"), the production values are excellent, particularly the scenery. Unfortunately, *Ashley Williams*, whom we loved as the adorable beach artist Alyssa in "Huff," doesn't quite cut it as a bitchy cowgirl. Ah, but Lifetimers will love "Sex & The City" hunk *John Corbett* in chaps. — "Dog Whisperer," Fri, 8pm, **Nat Geo**. The hype has *Cesar Milan* in Philly to aid *Patti LaBelle's* pooch, but more pressing is a Chicago hound who harasses skateboarders. [More at cable360.net] *SA*

**Basic Cable Rankings**

(1/22/07-1/28/07)

**Mon-Sun Prime**

1	USA	2.5	2259
2	DSNY	2.1	1882
3	TNT	1.7	1589
3	TBSC	1.7	1526
5	FOXN	1.6	1415
6	A&E	1.4	1242
7	LIFE	1.3	1187
8	TOON	1.2	1054
8	HALL	1.2	932
10	SPK	1.1	1048
10	HIST	1.1	993
10	CORT	1.1	924
13	NAN	1	963
13	FX	1	944
13	HGTV	1	935
13	DISC	1	931
17	ESPN	0.9	843
17	AMC	0.9	832
17	CMDY	0.9	823
17	SCIF	0.9	783
21	TLC	0.8	773
21	VH1	0.8	739
21	CNN	0.8	736
21	TVLD	0.8	733
21	ESP2	0.8	693
21	BET	0.8	655
27	MTV	0.7	668
27	FOOD	0.7	630
27	FAM	0.7	614
30	MSNB	0.6	499
30	BRAV	0.6	471
30	LMN	0.6	302
33	APL	0.5	475
33	NGC	0.5	342
33	SOAP	0.5	301
36	TTC	0.4	374
36	EN	0.4	359
36	WGNC	0.4	318
36	GSN	0.4	236
36	BIO	0.4	151
36	TV1	0.4	123
42	HLN	0.3	307
42	CMT	0.3	286
42	TWC	0.3	247
42	VS	0.3	242

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

**WANT SOME PERSPECTIVE?****CABLE 360 NET**

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Bearing It All at TCA

A glorious tableau lasts perhaps just a minute in the superb first episode of **Discovery Channel's** series "Planet Earth" (Mar 25, 8pm). A huge white polar bear slowly unfolds the blanket of snow that served for months as her winter bedroom. The mother bear is followed, awkwardly, by two cubs, who, as nature decrees, start life deaf and blind. The camera follows the trio as they embark on a 5-day journey to the sea. Great footage, no doubt, but that's only a part of the story. The rest emerged during Discovery's TCA panel, when *Doug Allan*, a specialist in filming the world's coldest places, told critics how he obtained those shots. Allan and an assistant camped for five weeks on Kong Karls Land, small islands in the Norwegian Arctic. It was winter and the living wasn't easy. Making it harder was Norway's ban on snowmobiles. That forced Allan to travel by foot, hauling a sled bulging with cameras. More than that, "if you have problems with the bears, [snowmobiles allow] you... [to] drive away from them," Allan said. From Allan's small cabin, which was visited nightly by bears, to the bear den where he filmed was a 3-mile walk across sea ice and up into a valley. At "any minute... there might be a bear coming," so Allan had to know how to keep a bear that was merely interested in him from becoming dangerous. Despite the hardship of walking, in the end Allan enjoyed the experience. "I was kind of feeling the Arctic like a bear would... [I] could tell the different textures of the snow underneath your feet. [I] could tell when the wind direction was slightly shifting. [I] could tell the difference between -35 and -30, -30 being that little bit more comfortable..." By the way, it was nearly 4 weeks before that mother bear emerged from hibernation. And it was on the shoot's last day that Allan, on a whim, headed to the bear den, without his camera. He spotted the mother bear. With weeks of experience, he knew she was headed for the sea. So he ran 3 miles to his cabin, grabbed his camera and got great footage. "A perfect ending to probably the best, most satisfying shoot that I've done." This kind of insight is available only at TCA, probably, and should result in more informative and entertaining television writing. SA

**Highlights:** "Nora Roberts' Angels Fall," Mon, 9pm, **Lifetime**. As a secure male I can admit to enjoying this female-oriented mystery/love story (of course, watching *Heather Locklear* for 2 hours helped). – "Suburban Secrets," Mon, 10pm, **Court TV**. Lord knows, Court's tried gimmickry, but sometimes the basics work best, as these simple tales of suburban crime show. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Top Design," Wed, 11pm, **Bravo**. Nothing succeeds like success, so Bravo's trying a variation on reality contest hit "Project Runway," and this attempt is appealing, ditto host *Todd Oldham*. Even better are its young-skewing room designs, which include indoor sandboxes and Chinese wedding beds. – "Sarah Silverman Program," Thurs, 10:30pm, **Comedy**. Another example of how tough it is to create good comedy. The offbeat *Silverman* succeeds sporadically, and that will be enough for fans. SA [More reviews at [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)].

### Basic Cable Rankings

(1/15/07-1/21/07)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.2	1993
2	DSNY	2.1	1851
3	TNT	1.6	1520
4	FOXN	1.3	1222
4	A&E	1.3	1211
4	AMC	1.3	1200
4	NAN	1.3	1152
4	HALL	1.3	972
9	TBSC	1.2	1108
9	TOON	1.2	1084
9	LIFE	1.2	1081
12	DISC	1.1	1000
13	FX	1	896
13	SCIF	1	878
15	HGTV	0.9	850
15	ESPN	0.9	842
15	CORT	0.9	809
15	HIST	0.9	788
15	SPK	0.9	788
15	CMDY	0.9	771
21	FAM	0.8	769
21	MTV	0.8	745
21	TLC	0.8	740
21	TVLD	0.8	689
25	VH1	0.7	678
25	CNN	0.7	616
27	FOOD	0.6	539
27	ESP2	0.6	536
27	APL	0.6	497
27	BET	0.6	482
27	SPD	0.6	426
27	LMN	0.6	311
33	BRAV	0.5	451
33	MSNB	0.5	403
33	NGC	0.5	305
33	SOAP	0.5	289
37	EN	0.4	358
37	TTC	0.4	336
37	TWC	0.4	334
37	GSN	0.4	235
37	BIO	0.4	159
37	TV1	0.4	124
43	HLN	0.3	262
43	CMT	0.3	257
43	TVGC	0.3	239

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## 'What Looked Good at TCA?'

That's the first question asked of those who attend TCA's cable week, which ended last Friday. It wasn't an easy answer this year, only partly because perennial star HBO fell a bit flat. Some variant of 'Reality TV Dominated TCA' is the headline seen after recent TCAs. Perhaps that's true, but it's not necessarily an accurate reflection of the state of cable programming. Here's why: Logical thinkers assume cable presents its best shows at TCA. From those presentations, reporters are asked (usually not gently) by editors to divine programming trends. In fact, the best shows aren't always ready for TCA, so others are presented. (Let's ignore the obvious: Nobody really knows what will turn out to be your best show). In addition, TCA decisions often are based on talent availability. It's a good bet reality talent is readily available, perhaps explaining the ubiquity of reality TV at TCA. Another factor gives networks pause when bringing non-reality talent to TCA: Is the talent 'press broken'? (Critics still talk lovingly about *Sean Young's* debacle of years ago, when the actress, touting a **Hallmark Channel** film during a TCA panel, uttered the memorable: 'Does Hallmark have a channel? Really?') One of the most misleading beliefs about TCA is that critics see lots of shows there. At this TCA, 22 cable nets, some with multiple channels, were sandwiched into 4 days (even with that girth, the shows discussed represent a sliver of cable's immense slate). Programmers, believing correctly that critics are unlikely to preview 50+ shows, send few advance screeners. Of course that led to the birth of the 2-min highlight reel. Curious thing, nearly every highlight reel shown at TCA was a winner (perhaps programmers should make highlight reels only, and stop making full shows). True, select shows are available on closed-circuit in the TCA hotel, but with evening parties and no writing breaks, it's the dedicated critic who rises at 7am for **GSN's** "The Women Who Changed Game Shows." Contrast this with TCA's broadcast weeks, when networks get entire days devoted to them, writing breaks abound and show panels are preceded by non-dawn closed circuit screenings of that show. Not that we're complaining. [Next Week: "Why TCA Still Matters"] SA

**Highlights:** "Battlestar Galactica," mid-season premiere, Sun, 10pm, **Sci Fi**. Really now, are fans attracted to "Galactica's" allegorical plot or its strong, gorgeous women in fatigues and toting guns? - "Iraq's Guns for Hire," Sun, 9pm, **Nat Geo**. Amazing footage shows private security contractors working (and dying) in Iraq. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Friends of God," Trs, 9pm, **HBO**. Irony lovers set your TiVo. Pastor **Ted Haggard**, a major presence in this eye-opening doc, says evangelicals have the best sex life. The doc was completed days before a scandal forced Haggard to resign as leader of his mega church and the huge Natl Assoc of Evangelicals. He admitted to "sexually immoral conduct," stemming from accusations made by a gay prostitute. -- "Digging the Truth," Mon, 9pm, **History**. A fascinating look at scientists seeking evidence of Atlantis' existence. SA [More reviews at [www.cable360.net](http://www.cable360.net)]

### Basic Cable Rankings

(1/08/07-1/14/07)

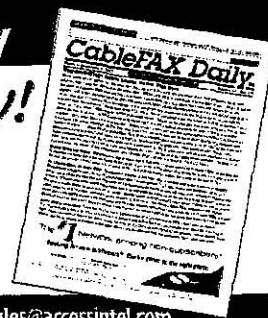
#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2.5	2314
2	USA	2.1	1955
3	TNT	1.6	1502
3	LIFE	1.6	1472
3	FOXN	1.6	1409
6	A&E	1.5	1384
7	TBSC	1.4	1267
8	NAN	1.3	1173
9	FX	1.2	1041
10	HALL	1.1	839
11	DISC	1	906
11	TOON	1	897
11	HGTV	1	895
11	AMC	1	888
11	CMDY	1	885
11	CORT	1	863
17	HIST	0.9	836
17	SPK	0.9	825
17	TVLD	0.9	821
17	SCIF	0.9	807
21	ESPN	0.8	775
21	VH1	0.8	745
21	FAM	0.8	742
21	CNN	0.8	738
21	MTV	0.8	734
26	TLC	0.7	650
26	BET	0.7	565
28	FOOD	0.6	568
28	BRAV	0.6	470
28	NGC	0.6	358
28	SOAP	0.6	340
28	LMN	0.6	333
33	MSNB	0.5	438
33	APL	0.5	417
33	TTC	0.5	393
36	ESP2	0.4	380
36	EN	0.4	353
36	HLN	0.4	320
36	WGNC	0.4	281
36	GSN	0.4	267
36	OXYG	0.4	251
36	TV1	0.4	134
43	TWC	0.3	311
43	CMT	0.3	292
43	CNBC	0.3	246
43	GOLF	0.3	240

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein**Pruning and Primping**

HGTV cultivated a showy '06, what with a summer eclipse of the 90mln HH penetration plateau and the delivery of double-digit revenue growth in each of the year's first 3 quarters. Now the **Scripps** net is hitting '07 with a confidence derived largely from programming content that it believes has become more beguiling to occasional viewers and, yes, even to an unexpected demo. "Our goal is to develop programming which appeals to adults, not just women," said svp, programming *Michael Dingley*, who said an emphasis on story-driven shows that feature entertaining hosts has started to level the gender scales. Also helping is shrewd trend-spotting and the provision of genuine, real-life content. "It's all about keeping it real; we don't do contrived here," said Dingley. Content themes to watch for this year include outdoor home environments, green living and real estate, he said. Addressing the 1st will be "Get Out Way Out" (Mar), featuring professional landscape designers who will "trick out" backyards with waterfalls, lagoons, rock-climbing walls and outdoor kitchens. Docusoap "Bought & Sold" (Apr) and series "Secrets That Sell" (June) will cater to viewers' increased interest in real estate amid a flagging market. "We look for long-term trends, not fads," said Dingley. Also in the mix is "Color Splash" (Mar), a show in which homeowners create their own vibrant palettes and unique art for room redesigns – and for which Dingley holds "very high hopes." Hosting will be *David Bromstad*, winner of last year's "HGTV Design Star," the net's initial foray into reality TV. Design Star will return in July with a "major twist," Dingley said. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Soundproof," Mon, 9pm ET, **BBC America**. The 3rd in BBC A's "Mystery Monday" is another top-notch crime of passion story. This one's especially complex because it involves the hearing impaired; the acting is tremendous. -- "Jonestown: Paradise Lost," Mon, 9pm, **History**. Purists will balk at the mix of re-enactment and interviews, but it tells the story of Rev *Jim Jones*' tragedy well. -- "In the Womb: Multiples," Sun, 9pm, **Nat Geo**. Amazing view of biology; and don't call them identical twins, they're monozygotic twins. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Naked Happy Girls," Sat, 9pm, **Playboy TV**. It's good to be the king, but it's not bad being *Andrew Einhorn*, a 30-something who finds pretty women on the street and convinces them to let him photograph them naked for his books. This is art, not porn, he insists. Right. -- "Cory in the House," 9:30pm, **Disney**. Cory's dad gets a gig in the White House, but why does the president act like a fool? -- "Louis C.K.," Sat, 10pm, **HBO**. *Louis C.K.* proves to be a good if foul-mouthed observer of the humor of daily life. -- "Jump In!" Fri, 8pm, **Disney**. Decently done vehicle for talented "HS Musical" alum *Corbin Bleu*. -- "Journey to Darfur," Mon, 8pm, **AmericanLife**. Nick and son *George Clooney* do an admirable job introducing the basics of Darfur. -- "Rome," season II premiere, Sun, 9pm, **HBO**. "Rome" begins its final season with Caesar's death in an ep that sizzles with terrific acting and plenty of blood. *SA*

**Basic Cable Rankings**

(1/1/07-1/7/07)

**Mon-Sun Prime**

1	DSNY	2.3	2056
2	USA	2.1	1914
3	TNT	1.7	1523
4	LIFE	1.5	1377
4	TBSC	1.5	1332
6	A&E	1.4	1253
7	NAN	1.3	1211
7	FX	1.3	1187
7	HALL	1.3	959
10	FOXN	1.2	1055
11	TOON	1.1	990
11	HGTV	1.1	986
11	SPK	1.1	979
11	CORT	1.1	969
11	TVLD	1.1	969
11	AMC	1.1	946
17	DISC	1	916
17	SCIF	1	888
17	VH1	1	878
20	MTV	0.9	837
20	FAM	0.9	828
20	HIST	0.9	825
20	ESPN	0.9	820
24	TLC	0.8	738
25	CMDY	0.7	661
25	CNN	0.7	619
25	FOOD	0.7	597
25	LMN	0.7	385
29	BET	0.6	503
29	BRAV	0.6	480
29	SOAP	0.6	330
32	APL	0.5	461
32	MSNB	0.5	445
32	EN	0.5	441
32	CMT	0.5	383
32	WGNC	0.5	324
32	NGC	0.5	304
32	GSN	0.5	283
32	BIO	0.5	215
40	ESP2	0.4	383
40	TTC	0.4	365
40	OXYG	0.4	263
40	TV1	0.4	138
44	HLN	0.3	271
44	TWC	0.3	242
44	TVGC	0.3	238

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

**WANT SOME PERSPECTIVE?****CABLE 360 NET**

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Dreamy Series

CNN's "American Morning" will next week (Mon-Fri) strive to add new depth to the selfless, enduring, and world-changing legacy of *Martin Luther King, Jr.* Through 5-part series "Words That Changed a Nation," anchor *Soledad O'Brien* will uncover and explore some of King's private writings and teachings, part of a 10K-document collection owned by an Atlanta contingent led by city mayor *Shirley Franklin*. "With this exclusive look at some of these documents, we tried to bring the words of Dr. King alive," said series co-exec prod *Jeffery Reid*. The series focuses on important stanzas in MLK's life, from his 1st public speech in '54 in Montgomery, AL, to the historic march on Washington, to his last days in Memphis. Interspersed with interviews of MLK confidants such as activist *Dorothy Cotton* and former UN Ambassador *Andrew Young*— who weeps when asked if he still misses the reverend— are largely unknown facts. For example: perhaps the greatest oration ever, King's "I Have a Dream" speech, had been delivered prior to Washington, D.C., and was to be passed over on that fateful day by another speech. In fact, King began with "Normalcy Never Again," written the prior night, before scrapping it and ultimately imploring: "Let Freedom Ring!" As his well-deserved holiday approaches, here's wishing that King's sonorous ideas and ideals will never be silenced. *CH*

**Highlights:** "The Sopranos," Wed, 9pm, **A&E**. Purists may reject Tony clean mouth (will advertisers?), but the series remains great, particularly seasons 1&2 with *Nancy Marchand* as Tony's mother Livia, who rivals J.R. Ewing's talent for duplicity. — "Gunslinger Girl," Fri, 11pm ET, **IFC**. A curveball—an anime cartoon with an incendiary name that's soft and poignant, at least when the bullets aren't flying. — "The Return," — "The Return," Mon, 9pm ET, 10, PT, **BBC America**. It's a mystery with multiple plot twists, but it's also a rare TV look at middle-aged folks in love. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "To Be Fat Like Me," Mon, 9pm, **Lifetime**. The best Lifetime original in years; the tale of a svelte teen posing as an obese one should be required viewing for HS students. -- "Lincoln Heights," Mon, 7pm, **ABC Family**. It's too early to know where "Lincoln Heights" is headed. Will it remain the rare, realistic look at a middle-class African-American family life that its initial eps promise or will it devolve to a sappy melodrama about an interracial teen relationship?—"Top 10 Game Show Hosts," Sun, 8pm ET, **GSN**. Camp, yes, but great camp; prepare the night before with 3 special "Family Feud" eps (8pm ET) featuring game show hosts playing the Feud. — "Rob & Amber," Thurs, 8pm ET, 9PT, **Fox Reality**. Having no idea who Rob & Amber are (am I the only one?), this new show about their fledgling marriage piqued my curiosity only slightly. — "Tease," Wed, 9pm, **Oxygen**. C'mon, the "Iron Chef" concept applied to hair styling? But it's entertaining, a cut above the rest (sorry), and will disprove the adage 'hair today, gone tomorrow.' — "Gay, Straight or Taken?" Mon, 8pm, **Lifetime**. Fun idea, nicely done: single female decides who's who among 3 hunks. *SA*

## Basic Cable Rankings (12/25/06-12/31/06)

### Mon-Sun Prime

1	ESPN	4	3677
2	USA	2.4	2191
3	DSNY	2.2	1993
4	LIFE	1.5	1405
5	TNT	1.4	1321
5	TBSC	1.4	1249
5	HALL	1.4	1038
8	A&E	1.2	1107
8	NFLN	1.2	468
10	TOON	1.1	988
10	NAN	1.1	980
10	CORT	1.1	955
13	FOXN	1	933
13	HIST	1	914
13	FX	1	858
16	SPK	0.9	855
16	FAM	0.9	853
16	SCIF	0.9	827
16	TVLD	0.9	815
16	CMDY	0.9	777
16	HGTV	0.9	776
16	AMC	0.9	768
23	DISC	0.8	778
23	CNN	0.8	747
25	TLC	0.7	677
25	MTV	0.7	617
25	BET	0.7	590
28	FOOD	0.6	508
28	LMN	0.6	318
30	VH1	0.5	472
30	BRAV	0.5	417
30	APL	0.5	407
30	CMT	0.5	380
30	NGC	0.5	307
30	SOAP	0.5	294
36	EN	0.4	391
36	ESP2	0.4	380
36	MSNB	0.4	360
36	TTC	0.4	323
36	WGNC	0.4	277
36	OXYG	0.4	249
36	GSN	0.4	232
43	TWC	0.3	259
43	HLN	0.3	243
43	TVGC	0.3	224
43	DHLL	0.3	200

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Not So Friendly

Following the comedic, feel-good "Friends," *Courteney Cox* completely flips the script in her wicked return to TV for FX's "Dirt" (Jan 2, 10pm), a series finally making it to air after 30 months of development. Cox stars as Lucy Spiller, a conniving and ruthless tabloid editor who will stop at nothing to dish the dirt on Hollywood's elite. Gay actor—Gotcha!; illicit trysts—Gotcha!; struggling career—Gotcha! True to the glitzy world of celebrities and the shameless tabloid industry, the premiere ep doesn't disappoint, what with lurid displays of deceit, drug use, sex, betrayal and manipulation. But amid a philandering basketball star (*Rick Fox*), a schizophrenic paparazzo and pompous, affected actors, a more profound message is intended. "This show digs deeper into the cost of fame and personal ambition... and shows the distinction between the truth of what celebrities are really like and their public image," said FX pres/GM *John Landgraf*, who was heartened when Cox decided to play the lead character (she is also an exec prod). He feels that her visual involvement will lure more people to the net and its "edgy, quality programming for adults," even if some are disappointed by expectations of a bubbly, wholesome Cox. "Lucy is the classic anti-hero, although she is maniacally dedicated to the truth," said Landgraf. Before the critical and commercial success of "The Shield," he said, "this net couldn't have possibly gotten a major star." Now *Denis Leary* stars in "Rescue Me," and other series have featured *Danny DeVito* and *Glenn Close*, who Landgraf said will soon star in her own FX original. As for "Dirt," Landgraf predicts mixed critical review and a healthy audience following, perhaps even viewership numbers comparable to the aforementioned hit shows. We'll see if the "bad" *Courteney Cox* can deliver the goods. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Monk," Fri, 9pm, **USA**. A special ep of the obsessive, compulsive detective series that foregoes color for black and white, attempting to make "Monk" seem like film noir. It's largely a success because of the story's quick pace and plot twists; and there's minimal obsession with Monk's obsessions. USA's unconventional thinking gets the ep "Highlights" status. (Monk runs in color at 10pm.) — "Funniest Commercials of the Year," Wed, 9pm, **TBS**. A hoot—our pick is a "Mr & Mrs Smith" spoof from Toyota. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "South of Nowhere," season finale, Fri, 8:30pm ET, **The N**. Season II of the teen drama has alternated between stellar and slow. The finale's the same—it drags before finishing on a violent high note. — "Geared Up," Wed, 10pm ET, **INHD**. A solid series that reports on tech gadgets with minimal geek speak. — "My Boys," Tues, 10pm, **TBS**. A good first foray into scripted comedy by TBS; strongest is the casting, with adorable *Jordana Spiro* as a sportswriter who's one of the guys but also wants romance. TBS begins running "Boys" on VOD Fri. *SA*

**Notable:** "Miracle on 34th St," Sun, noon, **AMC**. The 1947 classic runs in black and white and then in color through Xmas morning; a special about the film precedes it at 11:30am. *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings (12/11/06-12/17/06)

Mon-Sun Prime			
1	USA	2.1	1938
2	DSNY	2	1828
3	ESPN	1.9	1767
3	NFLN	1.9	737
5	LIFE	1.8	1665
6	TNT	1.7	1534
7	TBSC	1.5	1412
7	FAM	1.5	1372
9	NAN	1.4	1286
9	HALL	1.4	1061
11	A&E	1.3	1214
12	TOCN	1.2	1096
12	SCIF	1.2	1017
14	FX	1.1	1030
14	FOXN	1.1	1018
14	SPK	1.1	1007
17	CORT	1	868
18	DISC	0.9	855
18	HIST	0.9	839
20	HGTV	0.8	759
20	AMC	0.8	746
20	CMDY	0.8	719
23	TLC	0.7	660
23	CNN	0.7	647
23	MTV	0.7	639
23	TVLD	0.7	633
23	FOOD	0.7	620
23	BET	0.7	587
23	LMN	0.7	350
30	ESP2	0.6	513
31	CMT	0.5	440
31	VH1	0.5	439
31	APL	0.5	436
31	BRAV	0.5	427
31	MSNB	0.5	424
31	EN	0.5	403
31	SOAP	0.5	288
38	TTC	0.4	306
38	NGC	0.4	279
38	TV1	0.4	123
41	HLN	0.3	273
41	WGNC	0.3	239
41	TVGC	0.3	214
41	OXYG	0.3	204
41	GSN	0.3	203

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein**Santa Vince**

Sure **WWE** boss *Vince McMahon* is outspoken and often controversial, but he also insists on spreading holiday cheer to those who arguably need it the most. The WWE's estimable "Tribute to the Troops" program is back for the 4th consecutive year, highlighted by wrestling superstars such as *John Cena* and *The Undertaker*—and even McMahon himself—traveling throughout Iraq to entertain armed forces personnel. The culmination this year will be "WWE Tribute to the Troops: Christmas in Baghdad" on **USA** (Dec 25, 9pm ET), a show with matches taped just outside Baghdad, amid some 3K troops and several tanks. But to many involved, the journey alone provides the pinnacle. "Doing the show is great, but it's not nearly as intimate as our visits with the troops," said WWE evp, TV prod *Kevin Dunn*. "They're so appreciative, and they're enthusiasm is not to be believed." The 15 stops this year included a hospital for wounded soldiers in Germany and several forward operating bases throughout Iraq, many of which had never witnessed live on-base entertainment. "Not only is this a big morale boost to the troops, but to their families as well," said **Armed Forces Ent** dir *Art Myers*, who accompanied the WWE retinue and coordinated its transportation. "The troops are already asking when they're coming back," McMahon and his charges eschew special treatment during the tour, Myers said, instead choosing to show solidarity by eating MREs like the troops do, with some stars also sleeping in tents among the soldiers. The **Office of the Secretary of Defense** has awarded the WWE and McMahon medals for exceptional public service for these efforts. One *Sports Illustrated* writer even nominated McMahon for the pub's annual "Sportsman of the Year Award." Miami Heat guard *Dwayne Wade* won the award, but even at 6'4", McMahon and the WWE tower over him in Dec. **CH**

**Highlights:** "Battlestar Galactica," winter finale, tonight, 9, **SciFi**. In the midst of a great season tonight's ep may be the best, with a terrific climax and nearly every hot button pushed, including sex, violence, religion and infidelity. — "Dexter," finale, Sun, 10pm, **Showtime**. Against odds this bloody sleeper's become a hit; the tension-laced finale doesn't disappoint. Unfortunately "Sleeper Cell" (9pm) peaked last week. Sun's finale seems sluggish by contrast. **SA**

**Worth a Look:** "Christmas Do-Over," tomorrow, 8pm, **ABC Family**. OK, ABC F has to run feel-good holiday movies, and this *Jay Mohr* vehicle isn't bad for that genre. But it would have been fair play to acknowledge (at least in the press notes) that it borrows heavily from *Bill Murray's* "Ground Hog Day." — "The Fashion Team," Sat, 7, **TV Guide Channel**. Speaking of derivative, this series reminds us of *Joan & Melissa's* celeb fashion harangues, but it works because of *David Evangelista's* irreverence. — "Naomi's New Morning," Sun, 11am, **Hallmark**. *Wynonna* joins her mom's weekly show. Gosh, do the tears flow, as do the clichés. The lady can sing, though. — "Greg The Bunny," finale, tomorrow, 9pm, **IFC**. Greg blasts "The Passion of the Christ," fulfilling cable's mission as a supplier of content for niche audiences. **SA**

**Basic Cable Rankings**

(12/04/06-12/10/06)

**Mon-Sun Prime**

1	USA	2.3	2073
2	ESPN	1.9	1757
2	TNT	1.9	1721
2	FAM	1.9	1708
5	LIFE	1.8	1635
5	DSNY	1.8	1609
7	TBSC	1.7	1579
7	HALL	1.7	1282
9	NAN	1.3	1179
10	TOON	1.2	1123
10	A&E	1.2	1107
10	FOXN	1.2	1045
13	CORT	1.1	921
14	DISC	1	910
14	SCIF	1	908
14	HIST	1	898
14	AMC	1	864
18	HGTV	0.9	848
18	SPK	0.9	835
18	FX	0.9	817
18	CMDY	0.9	795
22	NFLN	0.8	295
23	MTV	0.7	675
23	TLC	0.7	654
23	FOOD	0.7	634
23	BET	0.7	611
23	LMN	0.7	348
28	CNN	0.6	548
28	TVLD	0.6	529
28	BRAV	0.6	504
31	ESP2	0.5	490
31	APL	0.5	460
31	VH1	0.5	439
31	EN	0.5	426
31	MSNB	0.5	400
31	NGC	0.5	283
31	SOAP	0.5	277
38	HLN	0.4	327
38	WGNC	0.4	257
38	GSN	0.4	220
41	TTC	0.3	279
41	CMT	0.3	248
41	OXYG	0.3	245
41	TVGC	0.3	224
41	DHLT	0.3	199
41	WE	0.3	197

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Big Jump for Lil' Bush

An impish, pint-sized *George W. Bush* that attends the fictitious Quayle Lmnty will ride a new school bus next summer, when **Amp'd Mobile's** original animated short "Lil' Bush: Resident of the United States" hits **Comedy Central's** linear lineup. The comedy net picked up 6 30-min eps—each comprised of 2 separate storylines—that will also feature a nerdy Lil' Condi, a goofy Lil' Rummy and an unintelligible Lil' Cheney who mumbles 'phrases' that only Lil' Bush seems to understand. "It took me about 2 seconds to realize that there was so much there, that it could make a great TV series," said Comedy Central evp, original programming and development **Lauren Corrao**. "It's part family comedy, part political satire, and its irreverent writing will work well on our net." The series gels nicely with Corrao's daily search for content that invites description by 1 or more of the following adjectives: intelligent, provocative, surprising and original. And like many other cable nets, that content at Comedy Central is increasing for and from digital platforms. The net has already produced roughly 10 original series across digital platforms, including "Baxter & McGuire," a short starring 2 animated testicles. Such digital content and delivery is changing the TV industry today much like cable TV altered the industry 20-25 years ago, Corrao said. Amp'd Mobile svp, content development and programming **Seth Cummings** is no less bullish about digital content. "Lil' Bush" was part of the carrier's mission to "create **HBO-type** original content for mobile" instead of the traditional video clips, he said. Amp'd has already deployed 10 such series shorts, and has 12 more in development. Cummings also said that an Amp'd cable VOD service is under consideration. **CH**

**Highlights:** "Sleeper Cell," Sun, 9pm, **Showtime**. With the terrorist cell's defeat, its ruthless leader, a brilliant *Oded Fehr*, has less influence on the storyline this season. Still, the tension and complexities are excellent. — "George Clooney: American Cinematheque Tribute," Wed, 8pm, **AMC**. Tribute? It's a roast that you feel part of—like being at a Hollywood party. — "The Lost Room," Mon, 9pm, **SciFi**. A 3-parter and an acquired taste, reminiscent of "Twin Peaks" and "Carnivale," so hang in there. — "One Punk Under God," Wed, 9pm, **Sundance**. *Jim and Tammy Faye's* punk-preacher son wrestles with their legacy and church traditions. **SA**

**Worth a Look:** "Tsunami, The Aftermath," begins Sun, 8pm, **HBO**. Sensitive told 2-parter about fictional characters dealing with the tragedy's results. -- "Taking the Hill," Tues, 9pm, **Discovery Times**. Step-by-step process film eyes military vets and Dems, some wounded, making grassroots bids for House seats. — "Chuck Barris Story," Sun, 8pm, **GSN**. Well-done review of "The Dating Game" creator's unusual life. A CIA assassin? — "Dirty Dancing," Wed, 10pm, **WE**. Muscled male hoofers pick a lucky lady to be their dance partner. Does *Kim Martin* know her viewers or what? — "Hunter S. Thompson on Film," Tues, 10pm, **Starz**. More ambitious than its title, but good intro to an icon. — "Wedding Wars," Mon, 9pm, **A&E**. Oh, I get it, *John Stamos* playing a gay man. Very cool. **SA**

### Basic Cable Rankings

(11/27/06-12/03/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	ESPN	2.6	2354
2	USA	2.1	1952
2	DSNY	2.1	1905
4	TNT	2	1806
5	HALL	1.8	1344
6	TBSC	1.6	1460
7	LIFE	1.5	1386
8	FAM	1.4	1235
9	NAN	1.2	1140
9	A&E	1.2	1120
9	FOXN	1.2	1085
9	TOON	1.2	1085
9	AMC	1.2	1036
14	FX	1.1	959
15	CORT	1	858
16	SCIF	0.9	834
16	SPK	0.9	822
16	HGTV	0.9	816
16	HIST	0.9	798
16	NFLN	0.9	357
21	DISC	0.8	773
21	CMDY	0.8	697
23	MTV	0.7	668
23	TVLD	0.7	656
23	FOOD	0.7	608
23	TLC	0.7	603
23	BET	0.7	570
23	LMN	0.7	389
29	CNN	0.6	585
29	VH1	0.6	557
31	ESP2	0.5	495
31	EN	0.5	435
31	APL	0.5	427
31	MSNB	0.5	399
31	NGC	0.5	332
31	SOAP	0.5	273
37	BRAV	0.4	324
37	WGNC	0.4	267
39	TWC	0.3	307
39	HLN	0.3	307
39	TTC	0.3	294
39	CMT	0.3	258
39	TVGC	0.3	242
39	OXYG	0.3	231
39	DHLT	0.3	202

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein**The Paw-suit of Greatness**

Don't let Knotty's 4-legged stature or droopy face fool you, for under his furry exterior is the makeup of a championship athlete. The bloodhound won innumerable accolades at dog shows during his career—including 'best-in-show' honors at the '05 AKC/Eukanuba National Championship—and has been recognized and fawned over by fans at public places. Before retirement he endured a daily regimen that included 20min jogs on his custom tread-mill and social comportment training. "Knotty used to play the crowd very well. He had charisma and he strutted his stuff," said owner Lyn Sherman. Thousands of canine title aspirants like Knotty will vie Dec 2-3 for this year's national title (and \$50K), which **Animal Planet** will air live (re-airings Dec 10, 14 & 16) and **Discovery Channel** will simulcast. The judging of breeds ranging from Boxers to Poodles will be highlighted with 12 cameras and close-up shots to aid home viewership. In its 3rd year of airing the show, Animal Planet will also allow fans to vote for their favorite pooches at [animalplanet.com](http://animalplanet.com), the results from which are used to determine the winner of the Eukanuba Viewer's Choice Award. "We try to take some mystery out of dog shows, which are thought by many to be elitist and hoity-toity," said Animal Planet evp/GM Maureen Smith. "It's important to show the human side, that these dogs are really like champion [human] athletes." Profiles of past champions such as Knotty will help drive these points home, as will features that spotlight dogs in typical situations. CH

**Highlights:** "Godspeed to Jamestown," tomorrow, 8pm, **History**. Sure, a show about building a full-size replica of the ship that brought colonists from London to VA in 1607 sounds dull, but the process and craftsmen are fascinating. -- "America's Game," tonight, 8:30pm, **NFL**. Weekly profiles of every Super Bowl winner; great footage (naturally) and surprisingly honest storytelling. -- "Worst Week of My Life," season II, tonight, 9:40, **BBC A**. "Johnny English" sidekick Ben Miller's miscues make Larry David's seem trivial. -- "Ithuteng," Sun, 6:30pm, **HBO**. Great insight into S. Africa via doc about a lady helping poor kids.

**Worth a Look:** "Wall St Warriors," Sun, 10pm, **INHD**. Finale of a fascinating look at traders. -- "The Librarian," Sun, 8pm, **TNT**. Noah Wyle's 2nd foray into Indiana Jones territory; somehow it works. -- "Trial by Choir," Sun 10pm, **TLC**. 4-pt doc poses interesting question: Can choral music help high schoolers improve their behavior? -- "Campus Ladies," season II, Tues, 11pm, **Oxygen**. No sophomore slump as Megan Mullally cameos. -- "The Kinks Christmas Concert," Thurs, 10pm, **VH1 C**. That 70's show. -- "Christmas Card," tomorrow, 9pm, **Hallmark**. A predictable, sappy love story, with "Deadwood's" Peter Jason and Ed Asner dominating as sly old goats. -- "Bad Girls Club," Tues, 10pm, **Oxygen**. Septet of naughty ladies shack up hoping to reform...on reality TV? Not likely.

**World AIDS Day:** See: [cablepositive.org/programming.html](http://cablepositive.org/programming.html) for AIDS-related shows (Fri-Sun).

**Basic Cable Rankings**  
(11/20/06-11/26/06)**Mon-Sun Prime**

1	DSNY	2.3	2076
2	ESPN	2.2	2064
3	USA	2	1870
4	TNT	1.7	1591
5	HALL	1.6	1209
6	TBSC	1.3	1200
6	A&E	1.3	1145
8	TOON	1.2	1106
8	NAN	1.2	1052
10	CORT	1.1	986
10	SPK	1.1	985
10	NFLN	1.1	404
13	LIFE	1	942
13	FX	1	898
13	HIST	1	895
16	SCIF	0.9	811
16	CMDY	0.9	796
16	FAM	0.9	776
16	FOXN	0.9	775
20	DISC	0.8	765
20	HGTV	0.8	750
20	MTV	0.8	732
20	AMC	0.8	714
20	TLC	0.8	699
25	TVLD	0.7	652
26	FOOD	0.6	589
26	ESP2	0.6	561
26	CNN	0.6	545
26	BET	0.6	519
26	BRAV	0.6	476
31	VH1	0.5	464
31	APL	0.5	433
31	EN	0.5	402
31	WGNC	0.5	319
31	LMN	0.5	259
36	MSNB	0.4	355
36	GSN	0.4	245
36	SOAP	0.4	225
36	NGC	0.4	220
36	TV1	0.4	141
41	TTC	0.3	305
41	CMT	0.3	284
41	HLN	0.3	245
41	TVGC	0.3	231
41	OXYG	0.3	196
41	SC	0.3	193

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein**Retirement Living: TV Grows Up**

What looked like the taping of an ordinary TV show Mon in suburban DC was actually an example of TV being stood on its head—instead of seeking younger demos, this channel wants to get older. The show's topic was the Rubik's Cube known as Medicare Part D, the drug coverage plan that has seniors (and some adult children) mystified. The host was *John Palmer*, late of NBC's "Today" show. And there was former **Court TV** svp *Scoot MacPherson*, running things. The studio audience seemed normal, although on closer inspection the collective age made *Lawrence Welk* followers seem spry. The site was an Erickson retirement village, the channel was **Retirement Living TV**, which runs for 4 hrs M-F on **Comcast's** CN8 and just went up on **Di-recTV**. RLTV is negotiating carriage on the Comcast regional network in Denver. The brainchild of retirement community progressive thinker *John Erickson*, it's available on systems at his properties in 10 states. He plans to plow \$4mln of his own money into the suburban DC-based channel during the next 4 years, but while he programs for the retired, it's not for the retiring. The channel is an information portal for seniors, he insists, so its all-original fare includes current affairs, health, and investing shows. "No "Golden Girls" reruns or old war movies. "This is my way of giving back...opening a line of communication for seniors," whom the media neglects, he says. But should this labor of love be profitable? "Well, we think so," he says, noting Madison Ave also neglects seniors. "But guess what? Retirees have more cash at this time in their lives; they can buy bigger cars and take cruises. I think we'll get those advertisers." Expansion? "Our next target is **EchoStar**; after we establish ourselves [and following the digital transition], we'll see if **Time Warner Cable**, **Cox** and other want us." As for the 71-year-old Palmer, "I was quietly retired when [RLTV] called; I can't believe I'm doing this again, but I'm getting a kick out of it." SA

**Highlights:** "The Wire," tonight, 8pm, **HBO**. A chance to see 3 eps of what arguably is cable's best series. — "Desperate Crossing," Sun, 8pm, **History**. Should your subs be concerned about not having enough to talk about on Thanksgiving, drive them to this special, which takes the basic holiday story and adds stuffing in the form of tremendous complications, as well as an Indian perspective. — "Koppel on Discovery: Iran—The Most Dangerous Nation" Sun, 9pm, **Discovery**. Two young Iranian girls were riding on the back of a motorcycle, which was going very fast, defying Iran's few traffic laws, *Ted Koppel* said the other night. Despite their anarchism, both girls had their heads covered, as women must in Iran. This contradiction is typical of Iran and makes the subtitle of this excellent special more provocative than fact. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Queen: A Night at the Opera," Tues, 8pm, **VH1 Classic**. Garth? Wayne? -- "S of Nowhere," tonight, 8:30 ET, **The N**. Spencer's lesbianism is dividing her folks—this is getting good. SA

**Not Reviewed:** "Comic Relief," tomorrow, 9pm, **HBO**, **TBS**.

**Basic Cable Rankings**

(11/06/06-11/12/06)

**Mon-Sun Prime**

1	ESPN	2.9	2649
2	DSNY	2.1	1912
3	USA	1.9	1717
4	TNT	1.7	1609
5	TBSC	1.6	1433
6	NAN	1.5	1364
7	FOXN	1.3	1217
8	HALL	1.2	921
9	A&E	1.1	1047
9	LIFE	1.1	1036
9	FX	1.1	985
9	CNN	1.1	983
9	TOON	1.1	974
14	FAM	1	893
14	CORT	1	850
16	HGTV	0.9	850
16	SPK	0.9	844
16	HIST	0.9	808
16	AMC	0.9	802
16	CMDY	0.9	775
21	FOOD	0.8	749
21	MTV	0.8	724
21	SCIF	0.8	706
21	DISC	0.8	696
25	TLC	0.7	643
25	ESP2	0.7	634
25	TVLD	0.7	626
25	MSNB	0.7	577
29	BET	0.6	461
29	LMN	0.6	304
31	EN	0.5	470
31	APL	0.5	457
31	BRAV	0.5	428
31	SOAP	0.5	289
35	VH1	0.4	356
35	OXYG	0.4	262
35	WGNC	0.4	247
35	NGC	0.4	229
39	TTC	0.3	292
39	HLN	0.3	278
39	CMT	0.3	228
39	TVGC	0.3	222
39	GSN	0.3	208
39	SC	0.3	192
39	TDSN	0.3	191
39	DHLT	0.3	180

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## The Best Medicine

A classic fundraiser that will elicit barrels of belly laughs is returning to cable, its mission to provide victims of Hurricane Katrina with much need money and a healthy dose of humor. The Comic Relief organization launched its 1st cable special on HBO in '86 and through 12 years of televised efforts on the net has raised more than \$50m for causes such as homelessness and the South Florida victims of Hurricane Andrew. Now, after an 8-year hiatus, the show will return to HBO on Nov 18 (9pm ET). TBS will also air this year's special, which is blessed with an unbelievable lineup of comedic all-stars. Jimmy Kimmel, Ray Romano, Rita Rudner, Roseanne Barr and the cast of HBO's "Entourage" are all slated to appear. Hosting will be Billy Crystal, Robin Williams and Whoopi Goldberg, the triumvirate that MC'd the original show 2 decades ago. "This is our baby," said HBO svp, entertainment Nancy Geller. "We have all been affected by the events in New Orleans, and when something like that happens, there isn't enough awareness you can do." The net is currently shooting segments from the Crescent City featuring recovery efforts and stars' reaction to the area devastation, which with live cut-ins will augment the show with sobering but necessary content. These additions, said Geller, are part of HBO's effort "to embrace the entire cause." TBS is with HBO a co-sponsor of The Comedy Festival, for which the show serves as the finale. "The Katrina situation really cried out to us, and we are excited to be a part of the show," said Ken Schwab, svp, programming, TNT and TBS. During the telecast, viewers will be prompted to contribute to the effort with phone and Web information. A little donation and the show will go a long way to giving the people of the Gulf Coast a fantastic gift: the return of a little laughter. It seems to always cure what ails. CH

**Highlights:** "Directed by John Ford," Tues, 8pm ET, TCM. New interviews with Scorsese & Spielberg nicely augment what was a beautiful doc by Peter Bogdanovich, reviewing Ford's career as a master painter of film. -- "The F Word," Mon, 9pm ET, 10 PT, IFC. Clever fiction/doc hybrid about protests against the Republican Convention in NYC, Aug '04. Any links between IFC chief Evan Shapiro's past and this film are purely coincidental. -- "Vincent," Mon, 9pm ET, 10pm PT, BBC A. OK, another mystery from BBC A, but the ensemble and writing in this are excellent. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Roseanne: Blonde & Bitchin'," tomorrow, 10pm, HBO. Looking well, Roseanne still complains about her weight: "I defend a woman's right to chew." And she can't fathom why gays want to marry, "haven't they suffered enough?" If your subs aren't big fans, watching her set may elicit a similar plea. -- "Paparazzi," Wed, 9pm ET, 11 PT, BBC A. Dispassionate but interesting doc look at British "paps." -- "Underfunded," Wed, 10pm, USA. Your subs must be in the mood for a quirky James Bond spoof; if so, this works. -- "Shootout," "Lost Evidence," and "Dogfights," tonight, 8, 9 & 10pm, History. We thought "Friday Night Fights" involved boxing; no more, as History cleverly groups strong, hr-long battle docs. Our favorite is "Shootout," detailing the battle of Iwo Jima (8pm). SA

### Basic Cable Rankings (10/23/06-10/29/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	ESPN	2.9	2713
2	DSNY	2.2	1984
3	USA	2.1	1961
4	TNT	1.5	1390
5	TBSC	1.4	1257
6	LIFE	1.3	1156
6	TOON	1.3	1154
6	NAN	1.3	1152
9	HALL	1.2	919
10	FOXN	1.1	1027
10	A&E	1.1	1021
12	HGTV	1	918
12	AMC	1	880
12	SCIF	1	852
15	SPK	0.9	830
15	CORT	0.9	782
17	HIST	0.8	754
17	DISC	0.8	752
17	FX	0.8	750
17	MTV	0.8	731
17	VH1	0.8	705
17	CMDY	0.8	683
23	TLC	0.7	648
23	TVLD	0.7	630
23	FOOD	0.7	612
23	CNN	0.7	600
27	FAM	0.6	585
27	BET	0.6	468
27	SOAP	0.6	304
30	ESP2	0.5	485
30	APL	0.5	459
30	BRAV	0.5	409
30	NGC	0.5	280
30	LMN	0.5	272
35	EN	0.4	399
35	MSNB	0.4	374
35	TTC	0.4	315
35	WGNC	0.4	308
35	OXYG	0.4	244
35	TV1	0.4	118
41	HLN	0.3	285
41	CMT	0.3	248
41	TVGC	0.3	235
41	GSN	0.3	206
41	DHLL	0.3	189
41	TDSN	0.3	151

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

# CableFAX

MAGAZINE

CableFAX  
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THE FAXIES

CableFAX 100

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Cable Seeks High Scores

Content providers including MTVN and TBS are making a big play for gamers, although it may prove to be a gambit requiring a hit of the restart button. Beginning Nov 22, eps of shows such as **Comedy Central's** "South Park" and **TBS' "Aqua Teen Hunger Force"** will be available for purchase/ rental through **Microsoft's** Xbox Live broadband suite, an adjunct service to the Xbox 360 gaming console. Roughly 3mln gamers will have access to the content, but no one knows whether the fickle segment will treat it like a holiday favorite or a lump of coal. "Certainly the audience [male 18-34 demo] match up is very strong, but we want to see how video programming fits in the gaming environment" said TBS vp, business development **Bill Stratton**. "We want to learn and experience what viewers' expectations and consumption patterns are like in this space." Do gamers even care about other media outside of their games? Will they pony up money for content? Will they abide the download time and the limited viewing window? "It's a brilliant plan on paper," wrote **Rick Munarriz** of **The Motley Fool**, and "the content selection is also pure genius. I just hope that Microsoft isn't overestimating the appetite for readily available content from an audience that prefers to roll its own." Meanwhile, **Speed** targets Xbox users differently. It will collaborate with Microsoft on "Forza Motorsport Showdown," a 4-ep competition series based on Xbox's eponymous franchise. It will air on **Speed** early next year and also be available through Xbox Live. "This is a great opportunity for the net, as the show makes us a little bit younger and cooler," said **Speed** vp, programming **Robert Ecker**. Yet even Ecker said unknowns remain. "We know the gaming community is not necessarily watching TV," he said. "There needs to be a fusion of both [video gaming and programming]." Let the games begin. **CH**

**Highlights:** "Thin," Tues, 9pm, **HBO**. Talk about reality TV, it doesn't get more real than this unflinching look at the daily struggles of women with eating disorders. – "Home Front," tomorrow, 7:30pm, **Showtime**. Props to Showtime for exposing us to a hero. Army Ranger **Jeremy Feldbusch**, blinded in Iraq, but unbowed, doggedly helps fellow vets. – "Everest," Tues, 10pm, **Discovery**. Proof that Discovery is back, as it chronicles the Everest's '06 climbing season. – "City of Men," season III premiere, Tues, 9pm, **Sundance**. Gritty Rio-based teen drama sizzles.

**Worth a Look:** "Positive Voices: Matthew Cusick," tomorrow, 6:15pm, **Sundance**. A Cable Positive co-production about a Cirque du Soleil acrobat who was wrongly dismissed because he's HIV positive. – "Murder by the Book," Mon, 10pm, Court TV. "L.A. Confidential" author **James Ellroy** describes his mother's brutal murder (fine) and his sexual fascination with her (not so good). – "SpongeBob SquarePants: Best Day Ever," tonight, 8, **Nick**. Teamed with release of the CD; catchy tunes. – "Greg The Bunny," season II premiere, tomorrow, 9ETpm, **IFC**. Greg whacks **Fox**.

**Not Reviewed:** "Britney & Kevin: E! True Hollywood Story" tonight, 9, **E!** OK, but we were expecting a special "E! True Hollywood Story: Don Rumsfeld."

### Basic Cable Rankings

(10/30/06-11/05/06)

#### Mori-Sun Prime

1	ESPN	3	2771
2	DSNY	2.2	2007
3	USA	2.1	1886
4	TNT	1.7	1562
5	FOXN	1.3	1188
5	TOON	1.3	1141
7	TBSC	1.2	1107
7	LIFE	1.2	1094
7	NAN	1.2	1094
10	HALL	1.1	817
11	A&E	1	947
11	FX	1	944
11	HGTV	1	889
11	SCIF	1	873
15	CMDY	0.9	857
15	HIST	0.9	840
15	AMC	0.9	840
15	FAM	0.9	816
15	SPK	0.9	809
15	CORT	0.9	804
21	MTV	0.8	686
22	DISC	0.7	691
22	ESP2	0.7	677
22	CNN	0.7	635
22	TVLD	0.7	631
22	TLC	0.7	613
27	FOOD	0.6	564
27	VH1	0.6	537
29	APL	0.5	462
29	BET	0.5	427
29	BRAV	0.5	425
29	EN	0.5	422
29	MSNB	0.5	399
29	SOAP	0.5	291
29	LMN	0.5	274
36	TTC	0.4	306
36	WGNC	0.4	284
36	NGC	0.4	277
36	GSN	0.4	218
40	HLN	0.3	269
40	CMT	0.3	227
40	TVGC	0.3	226
40	SC	0.3	210
40	OXYG	0.3	207
40	VS	0.3	188
40	DHLT	0.3	186

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Real Horror

Evil fiends like Jason Vorhees and Freddy Krueger always emerge at this time of year, frightening us with their nefarious and gruesome deeds. Fortunately, though, these 2 creeps are fictitious. It would be a pleasure to say the same of *Saddam Hussein*, a real-life monster who atrociously earned the "Butcher of Baghdad" nickname during his bloody reign over Iraq. Courtesy of 2 Iraqi wars and the ultimate extraction of his ghoul-ish visage from that spider-infested hole, we've all heard nauseating stories about Saddam's brutality. With "Inside Saddam's Reign of Terror" (Oct 29, Nov 1&10), **Nat Geo** provides shocking, video-taped evidence of the grim truth. "Everyone in Iraq seems to be a victim of Saddam's regime," said sr prod *Tresha Mabile*, who has traveled extensively in Iraq. "It was absolutely a republic of fear [under Saddam], and it's amazing that they [Iraqis] have hope for a better life." Saddam's list of genocidal acts includes chemical bombings of Kurds, beheadings of perceived traitors, gunshot executions, terminal beatings. "Saddam's regime is right up there with Stalinist Russia and Hitler's Germany," said Nat Geo's svp, special programming *Michael Cascio*. "The barbarity is mind boggling." In a sickening twist, much of the footage shown during the net's feature was ordered taped by Saddam himself to spread terror throughout the country. He thrived on violence and the fear of his citizenry. He would even bring his sons to torture sessions when they were mere boys. "There is no way a TV audience could watch the raw material we cut out," said exec prod *Jonathan Towers*. "There's only so much you can do to challenge an audience." Viewing the show, I no longer gave a damn if *Pres Bush* found WMDs in Iraq. At the time, a far more dangerous weapon was in power. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Masters of Horror," tonight, 10, **Showtime**. For the past 2 Halloweens, Showtime's asked top-notch directors to helm 1-hour horror films. Last year we liked "Incident On and Off a Mountain Rd," directed by Don "Beastmaster" Coscarelli. A gem this year is "Family," starring "Cheers" icon *George Wendt* as a suburbanite who belongs at Bates Motel. Some horror films contain tidal waves of blood, not Family, which is humorous horror. More important, *John Landis* is a master director and is probably grinning. -- "Angel Rodriguez," Mon, 9pm, **HBO**. A gritty but sensitively told story of a troubled city kid and his emotionally invested guidance counselor (*Rachel Griffiths*). Speaking of real people's emotional investments, don't miss this week's ep of writer *Jimmy McGovern's* "The Street" (Tues, 10pm, **BBC A**) or *Robbie Coltrane's* return as McGovern's crime solver in "Cracker," Mon, 9pm ET, 10 PT, **BBC A**. **SA**

**Worth a Look:** "The House Next Door," Mon, 9pm, **Lifetime**. Face it: with a few tweaks "Desperate Housewives" could be a horror series. Lifetime's cleverly done that and given the appropriately creepy *Lara Flynn Boyle* a strong vehicle. (Minimum gore) -- "Exorcism," Tues, 8pm, **History**. Who knew? *Linda Blair* rates on History. In the hands of *Margaret Kim* this special and those on *Dracula* (Sun, 10pm) and *Frankenstein* (Sun, 8pm) are good watching. -- "Pumpkinhead: Ashes to Ashes," Sat, 9pm, **Sci Fi**. A lethal combo: heavy gore and pumpkins. **SA**

## Basic Cable Rankings (10/16/06-10/22/06)

### Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2.8	2544
2	ESPN	2.5	2307
3	USA	1.8	1673
4	TNT	1.6	1430
5	NAN	1.3	1149
5	TOON	1.3	1139
7	LIFE	1.2	1090
7	TBSC	1.2	1075
9	FOXN	1.1	1030
9	HALL	1.1	837
11	SPK	1	959
11	A&E	1	926
11	FX	1	864
14	DISC	0.9	825
14	SCIF	0.9	808
14	HGTV	0.9	799
14	HIST	0.9	786
14	FAM	0.9	774
14	CORT	0.9	754
20	CMDY	0.8	711
20	MTV	0.8	704
20	VH1	0.8	684
23	TVLD	0.7	654
23	TLC	0.7	632
23	BRAV	0.7	589
23	AMC	0.7	586
27	CNN	0.6	583
27	FOOD	0.6	573
29	APL	0.5	490
29	BET	0.5	446
29	ESP2	0.5	428
29	EN	0.5	405
29	LMN	0.5	267
29	SOAP	0.5	254
35	MSNB	0.4	343
35	TTC	0.4	321
35	WGNC	0.4	267
35	NGC	0.4	241
35	TV1	0.4	115
40	HLN	0.3	300
40	CMT	0.3	244
40	TVGC	0.3	223
40	OXYG	0.3	201
40	GSN	0.3	183
40	DHLT	0.3	178
40	SC	0.3	174

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney



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## Powerhouse speaker line-up confirmed for Future of Television Forum

The Future of Television Forum, presented by Digital Media Wire, CEA and NYU's Stern School of Business, will be held November 16-17 at NYU and brings together decision-makers from cable and broadcast networks, cable and satellite operators, high-tech and advertising. This year's speakers include industry superstars from CBS, Disney-ABC, Sony, Starz, NBC Universal, and many more. Visit our website to learn more about this line-up and register today.

# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Catching Up

In a deal that reunites former sibling properties, the **Hallmark Channel** greenlit this week the production by **RHI Ent** of at least 12 original TV movies and 3 miniseries for '07 delivery. At the reunion's center is production house RHI, an entity that has volleyed over decades between current pres *Robert Halmi* and the Hallmark family. In 1994, Halmi sold RHI to **Hallmark Cards** and assumed the roles of pres/CEO of the segment, rechristened **Hallmark Ent**. Halmi and a private investment firm reacquired the business in Jan and gave it the original RHI name. Although the history is somewhat convoluted, HC programming evp *Dave Kenin* said the current pact exhibits no nebulousness. "Movies are the centerpiece of our network, and this is our best chance to grow their performance," he said. "We have committed to 12 [features] that are very brand friendly--all about relationships and family." Since '01, the RHI-HC duo has produced nearly 100 movies and miniseries. The contracted content will feature "adult drama skewed slightly toward women and will deliver the bulk of Hallmark Channel's prime ratings," said Halmi. 3 telefilms are currently under production. "Claire" stars *Valerie Bertinelli*, a widowed mother with psychic powers; "Love is a Four Letter Word" offers a comedic look at divorce lawyers; and "Spring Thaw" features an attorney trying to reconnect with her ailing father. Kenin hopes these and other future movies help HC connect with a younger demographic, a group to which RHI is attempting to further appeal with action/adventure thrillers. "They sell broader," said Halmi, whose movies cater almost exclusively to cable nets. He's intent on providing more content for current clients such as **Spike** and **Sci Fi** through films "with larger than life beasts that like to eat people." The relationship between HC and RHI is decidedly less dangerous. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Why I Wore Lipstick to My Mastectomy," Mon, 9pm, **Lifetime**. We're biased because we love *Geralyn Lucas*, the Lifetime exec whose battle with breast cancer is the film's genesis. Still, Lipstick captures the physical and emotional anguish of being very sick. -- "Initiation of Sarah," Sun, 8pm, **ABC Family**. In a year of very good ABC F originals, this college-based horror film remake is the best so far. -- "Atlas: Australia," Sun, 9pm, **Discovery**. Not sure which is better, Great Barrier Reef in HD or *Russell Crowe's* narration. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Bravo's Funny Girls: Joan Rivers," Tues, 10pm, **Bravo**. Good series kickoff, but Rivers' humor isn't timid. She hates getting old since everything falls: "Now I can get a mammogram and manicure at the same time." -- "The F-Word," Sun, 9pm, **BBC Am**. At first it's difficult to understand talented but trashy mouthed chef *Gordon Ramsay's* newest series, which mixes cooking, contests and star gazing at Ramsay's breakneck pace. The show cooks when Ramsay remains in the kitchen. -- "The Monastery," Sun, 10pm, **TLC**. Interesting premise in a beautiful setting: 5 lay lads spend 40 days in a NM monastery; in ep 1 tempers flare and we nearly get a felonious monk. -- "Dog Whisperer," season 3 premiere, Mon, 9pm, **Nat Geo**. *Cesar Millan* attempts to tame an anti-social thoroughbred from CA named Kobe. Go figure. *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

(10/09/06-10/15/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	ESPN	2.6	2395
2	DSNY	2.4	2121
3	USA	2	1837
4	TNT	1.7	1552
5	TOON	1.5	1352
6	TBSC	1.3	1170
6	NAN	1.3	1146
8	FOXN	1.1	1035
8	LIFE	1.1	1035
8	A&E	1.1	1005
8	SPIK	1.1	993
8	HALL	1.1	846
13	VH1	1	910
13	FX	1	879
15	HGTV	0.9	860
15	SCIF	0.9	808
15	MTV	0.9	775
18	HIST	0.8	740
18	CMDY	0.8	734
18	AMC	0.8	722
18	CORT	0.8	686
22	DISC	0.7	691
22	TLC	0.7	654
22	CNN	0.7	654
22	TVLD	0.7	645
22	BRAV	0.7	573
27	FAM	0.6	580
27	FOOD	0.6	579
27	BET	0.6	506
30	AFL	0.5	466
30	SOAP	0.5	286
30	LMN	0.5	275
33	EN	0.4	398
33	MSNB	0.4	363
33	TTC	0.4	311
33	WGNC	0.4	265
37	ESP2	0.3	307
37	HLN	0.3	304
37	CMT	0.3	246
37	TWC	0.3	239
37	TVGC	0.3	233
37	NGC	0.3	205
37	GSN	0.3	194
37	OXYG	0.3	185
37	DHLT	0.3	185
37	NOGG	0.3	138

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## G4 Checks In

Guests at **The Block** hotel in Lake Tahoe, CA, may opt for room amenities including a stripper pole, a beer-proof floor or a Feng Shui motif. And all are greeted with a Pabst Blue Ribbon upon arrival. Utile technology such as video game consoles, home theater systems, and HSD service is prominent throughout the compound. The targeted snowboarding clientele and its attendant culture perpetuate babes and bacchanalia. In short, The Block is a Shangri-La for young males. And it will soon be the centerpiece of **G4's** 1st foray into reality TV. "This felt like a natural fit to what we are doing," said G4 pres *Neal Tiles*. "The core G4 tenet is to bring guys behind-the-scenes access to things they are interested in, and The Block is going out of its way to do that." 6-10 eps have been greenlit for a Jan debut, when pro snowboarders, parking lot jams and raucous winter parties will be unleashed on the net. "After Thanksgiving, you can't throw a stick here and not hit a pro rider," said hotel co-founder *Liko Smith*, who was drawn to the project's mission alignment. "The 18-35 male demo--that's us all day long. And G4's edgy, off-the cuff approach to the market is very similar to ours," Smith said. The show aims to provide an unvarnished and authentic view of the staff, clientele and events that define a season at surely one of Lake Tahoe's most progressive lodges. "We are not trying to create drama where there isn't any," Tiles said. "The show will not be contrived; it will be fascinating to see where the personalities go." Providing a reality concept for the genre's sake was never the goal, he said. Reality at The Block simply provides a relevance to G4's audience that fits as snugly as snowboarding boots. Let the fun begin. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Going to Pieces: the Rise and Fall of the Slasher Film," tonight, 9, **Starz**. Good work from Starz; an in-depth look at horror flicks. – "Into the Fire," tonight, 8, **History**. One of the most emotional pieces we've seen on History and a fitting tribute to some courageous people. SA

**Worth a Look:** “Jacob & Joshua,” Mon, 10pm, **Logo**. Twin brothers trying to make it in the music biz; one is a partier, the other is cautious, both are gay and their religious parents don’t know it. – “A Journey of Spirits,” part I, Sun, 7am, **Hallmark**. Fine film about Jewish composer and iconoclast *Debbie Friedman*; amazing, one week on the job, and *Henry Schleiff* gets a Jewish film on **Hallmark** (just kidding, Henry). – “After Innocence,” Thurs, 8:25pm, **Showtime**. You’ve seen this story on **Court**; people exonerated by DNA evidence after serving years in jail. Still, a well-done story that merits re-telling. – “Moments That Changed Us: John Glenn.” Sun, 8pm, **AmericanLife**. *Glenn*’s heroics in ‘61 as America’s 1st person in space can’t be debated, but he cites his wife for her courageous fight against stuttering. – “Haunted Prison,” tomorrow, 9pm, **SciFi**. Not destined to be a classic of the horror genre, but a good prep for Halloween. SA

**Basic Cable Rankings**  
(10/02/06-10/08/06)

Mon-Sun Prime			
1	ESPN	3.5	3248
2	DSNY	2.5	2202
3	TNT	2.1	1903
4	USA	2	1869
5	TOON	1.3	1179
6	FOXN	1.2	1062
7	NAN	1.1	1039
7	TBSC	1.1	1020
9	LIFE	1	935
9	FX	1	932
9	HGTV	1	894
9	HALL	1	747
13	SCIF	0.9	811
13	A&E	0.9	793
13	CMDY	0.9	786
13	HIST	0.9	778
17	SPK	0.8	749
17	MTV	0.8	740
17	AMC	0.8	701
17	CORT	0.8	683
17	TVLD	0.8	676
22	DISC	0.7	681
22	TLC	0.7	654
22	CNN	0.7	639
22	ESP2	0.7	623
26	VH1	0.6	564
26	FAM	0.6	563
26	FOOD	0.6	538
26	BRAV	0.6	475
26	BET	0.6	463
26	LMN	0.6	292
32	APL	0.5	450
32	SOAP	0.5	286
34	EN	0.4	377
34	MSNB	0.4	372
34	TTC	0.4	309
34	WGNC	0.4	294
34	NGC	0.4	223
39	HLN	0.3	269
39	CMT	0.3	234
39	TVGC	0.3	229
39	GSN	0.3	211
39	SC	0.3	194
39	OXYG	0.3	177
39	TDSN	0.3	174
39	NKTN	0.3	125

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Throwing Content

DirectTV's new original series "Project MyWorld" (Oct 2, 6pm) features 3 sexy young women traversing the globe in search of music, adventure and love – pursuits not necessarily ranked in that order. The 1st ep finds them dodging vegetables during the customary Valencia, Spain, tomato fight, and the overall series leverages the powerful branding of sibling property **MySpace**. Pictures, bios and highlights of the show are available at the social networking site, and the women strive to meet site members throughout their travels. Project will join musical programming, gaming contests, user-created podcasts and faith-based content on **The 101**, the DBS ops' 24-hour original channel. DirectTV is using live performances by bands such as the *Red Hot Chili Peppers* and the *Pussy Cat Dolls* to evade not tomatoes, but dreaded churn. "We need to latch onto content that viewers are passionate about because churn is the most difficult thing to tackle," said DirectTV evp, entertainment *Eric Shanks*. "We are working hard on that, and it helps that, unlike a normal network, we can run whatever we want." DirectTV will invest more heavily in originals next year for **The 101**, an offering positioned for the "Boomer Shadow" generation that begins its teenage years in '07 – and one Shanks hopes acts as an ideal mouthpiece for DirectTV. "There's nothing better inside a home than a whining teenager to help prevent a switch to cable," he said. DirectTV currently promotes the 101 strictly to subs but plans to use it as a value-added sales tool as programming expands, said Shanks. Early viewership data shows a healthy following from both the female 25-34 and male 18+ demos, but the data remains secondary in importance. It's all about fighting that messy, filthy churn. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Dexter," Sun, 10pm, **Showtime**. A fine treatment of a difficult novel ("Dreaming Dexter" by *Jeff Lindsay*) whose complicated protagonist is a police forensics specialist by day and a Robin Hood-like vigilante by night. The strengths of this dark series are its writing, tone and cast, particularly *Jennifer Carpenter* as Dex's sister. – "Atlas: China," Sun, 9pm, **Discovery**. The kickoff of *John Hendricks'* \$60-million HD world journey is well done, even in standard def. And chronicling the stories of 4 citizens as a device to embody the vast nation is clever. But critics of China's repressive regime beware: this is family TV, providing an interesting but relatively uncomplicated and largely apolitical glance of the country. *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Paula's Party," tonight, 10, & "Nigella Feasts," Sun, 1pm, **Food**. Two victories for Food, which knows tinkering with a winner is better than radical change. Emeril blossomed when he got a studio audience. Paula's mature species needs no assistance... still, she glows here with an audience. Despite her posh accent, Nigella sticks to easy cuisine (chili for goodness sake!), but her lime guacamole and smoldering brown eyes hook. – "Climate Code with Dr Heidi Cullen," Sun, 5pm, **Weather**. The opener of this series on global warming starts slowly. Dare we say we're hoping it warms up. *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

(9/18/06-9/24/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	ESPN	2.5	2295
2	DSNY	2.1	1875
3	USA	2	1839
4	TNT	1.5	1419
5	TOON	1.3	1202
6	NAN	1.2	1104
6	FOXN	1.2	1068
6	LIFE	1.2	1057
6	FX	1.2	1048
10	A&E	1.1	968
10	HALL	1.1	805
12	SCIF	1	834
13	TBSC	0.9	857
13	HGTV	0.9	805
13	TVLD	0.9	759
16	MTV	0.8	771
16	SPK	0.8	738
16	CMDY	0.8	721
16	DISC	0.8	713
16	HIST	0.8	688
21	TLC	0.7	666
21	AMC	0.7	663
21	CNN	0.7	634
21	CORT	0.7	621
25	FOOD	0.6	573
25	FAM	0.6	561
25	VH1	0.6	555
25	ESP2	0.6	536
25	APL	0.6	506
30	BET	0.5	433
30	SOAP	0.5	288
30	LMN	0.5	266
33	EN	0.4	383
33	BRAV	0.4	373
33	MSNB	0.4	358
33	HLN	0.4	348
33	TTC	0.4	328
38	TVGC	0.3	247
38	TWC	0.3	230
38	CMT	0.3	219
38	OXYG	0.3	215
38	NGC	0.3	200
38	WGNC	0.3	199
38	SC	0.3	189
38	GSN	0.3	173
38	TDSN	0.3	162

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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databriefs



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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## SPEED Hits the Gas

Most TV shows don't embrace the 'winner-take-all' mentality, instead choosing to offer parting gifts or polite applause to unsuccessful contestants. But **Speed's** popular "PINKS" franchise, recently greenlit for a 4th season, gleefully personifies the cliché to harness more viewership horsepower. Each week, a pair of vehicles competes in a drag racing competition (best 3-of-5), and the winning driver immediately assumes ownership of the loser's car or truck. Wheels and pride are wrested from the futile racer. "The show is about drag racing inherently, but it offers real human drama and real stakes," said Speed vp, programming **Robert Ecker**. "It is definitely striking a chord with people." As a '75 Chevy Nova battles a '93 Ford Ranger during the next ep (Wed, 9:30pm ET), the series has earned triple-digit increases in HH delivery and in all key demos since its summer '05 inception. It now draws more than 2mln weekly viewers, Ecker said, making it the net's highest-rated original program. Crowds at ep tapings have swelled to thousands of energetic fans, and more importantly, a paucity of willing racers no longer exists. "We used to look under rocks for competitors, but now we have all kinds of racers and teams from all over," Ecker said. "PINKS" has also become the lead driver for the net's multi-platform push. It dominates a cable VOD platform that passes 18mln HHs (**Comcast, Cox, Time Warner Cable**), and eps/clips are available on **iTunes, Amazon** and mobile carriers including **Amp'D Mobile** and **Cingular Wireless**. "Pinks' is a star performer in the digital arena, and it definitely helps our [overall] non-linear initiatives," said Speed vp, interactive media **Kevin Annison**. "The intensity of the show is awesome." Promotional webisodes will tout the show's 4th season (Feb), and discussions are underway with additional wireless carriers, he said. It seems the series is hitting on all cylinders. - CH

**Highlights:** "Battlestar Galactica," tonight, 9, **SciFi**. Encourage your subs to watch this terrific allegorical series whose complex characters elevate it beyond mere sci fi special effects.-- "Artland: USA," Thurs, 8pm ET, **Gallery HD**. Props to Voom's terrific use of HD. Marry it with 2 youthful hosts on an RV trip in search of our country's interesting architecture and art and make high brow material accessible.-- "Atlas: Italy," Sun, 9pm, **Discovery**. Ep 2 of Hendricks' HD journey is more fun than ep 1 (China), thanks to the gondola apprentice and *Isabella Rossellini's* narration.-- "Eye of the Leopard," Sun, 9pm, **Nat Geo**. Excellent footage captures the great predator. SA

**Worth a Look:** The Street," Tues, 10pm, **BBC A**. Terrific drama about common folk in Northern England; this week's beauty stars *Jim Broadbent* as a cash-strapped senior; best ep is #5 (Oct 31, 10pm), which nails diversity. -- "The Journalist and the Jihadi: The Murder of Daniel Pearl," Tues, 8pm, **HBO**. A beautifully woven tale that ends with the awful death of The *WSJ* reporter. -- "I Pity The Fool," Wed, 10pm, **TV Land**. Please don't take the life lessons of Mr T seriously (he doesn't), but it's entertaining. -- "Rank" Mon, 9pm ET, 10PT, **IFC**. Think IFC's cosmopolitan and urban? Perhaps, but *Cowboy Maxwell* will enjoy this gritty doc about bull riding. SA

### Basic Cable Rankings (9/25/06-10/01/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	ESPN	2.8	2623
2	USA	2.1	1916
2	DSNY	2.1	1842
4	TNT	1.6	1431
5	TOON	1.3	1183
6	NAN	1.2	1122
6	FOXN	1.2	1058
8	LIFE	1.1	983
8	FX	1.1	973
10	TBSC	1	921
10	SPK	1	874
10	HALL	1	774
13	SCIF	0.9	828
13	A&E	0.9	804
13	HGTV	0.9	790
16	DISC	0.8	740
16	ESP2	0.8	737
16	CMDY	0.8	689
16	VH1	0.8	681
20	MTV	0.7	667
20	TVLD	0.7	659
20	CORT	0.7	651
20	HIST	0.7	645
20	CNN	0.7	610
20	AMC	0.7	607
26	FAM	0.6	565
26	TLC	0.6	554
26	FOOD	0.6	536
26	BET	0.6	484
26	BRAV	0.6	481
26	SOAP	0.6	308
32	APL	0.5	492
32	LMN	0.5	251
34	EN	0.4	348
34	HLN	0.4	338
34	MSNB	0.4	331
34	TTC	0.4	320
34	TV1	0.4	115
39	CMT	0.3	255
39	TVGC	0.3	225
39	WGNC	0.3	217
39	NGC	0.3	201
39	OXYG	0.3	198
39	GSN	0.3	191
39	DHLT	0.3	164
39	TDSN	0.3	157

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein**Society Wired Shut**

Leading off with full frontal male nudity and ending with one schoolgirl slashing another's face, the 40th ep of HBO's "The Wire" (Sept 24, 10pm) offers the shocking and graphic realism endemic to many of the network's series. But this cop show, which spotlights the politics, drug trade and kids' trials in the city of Baltimore, is atypical in myriad ways. Its chief thrust is unapologetic, acerbic social commentary, driven home with accurate portrayals of inner-city life. "In this modern world, we have constructed a triumph of capitalism in which people are worthless, and there is no interest in reintegrating the forgotten back into society," said the show's exec prod/writer David Simon at a Wed ep screening in D.C. "We are trying [with this show] to be subversive and make a political statement with TV drama." Simon's background as a journalist and co-prod Ed Burns' experience in law enforcement and education add legitimacy. "We have impaled ourselves on a cross of pleasure, and we just don't care about the people around us," said Burns, who espoused this season's focus on Baltimore's decaying educational system. The series' structure is also different, characterized by Simon as "a novel in a video sense," a character-driven feature with compounding plotlines. As such, he said, it has enlisted a healthy following from readers. But even with honorable intent, compelling characters and fabulous writing, "The Wire" also delivers less-than-stellar ratings. Last season, it averaged 1.5m viewers/ep, and the 1st 2 eps of this season have averaged 1.65m. Even so, Simon remains undaunted, as does HBO, which recently greenlit a 5th season. "If we were concerned about maximizing viewership, we wouldn't have a cast that is 70% African American," said Simon. "This show was not conceived for what people want." What many desire is real life on TV, not outside their window.

**Highlights:** "On The Run," Tues, 11pm, **Court TV**. One of the best short series we've seen from Court. In each ep, the criminals have escaped prison, but they're so clever even the police admire them, albeit begrudgingly. — "Wait 'til Next Year: The Saga of The Chicago Cubs," Tues, 10pm, **HBO**. This short film about the hapless cubbies is as close to perfect sports filmmaking as we've seen (despite our Mets taking a beating here). One question while we watched: Why did the filmmakers nearly ignore Wrigley's 7th inning stretch festivities? The answer, and a huge payoff, is found at the film's end. SA

**Worth a Look:** "American Misfits," Sun, 9pm, **FUEL TV**. The skateboarding sketch comedy series gets a boost when Kiefer Sutherland shows for the season finale. Ain't corporate synergy great. — "Kraken: Tentacles of the Deep," tomorrow, 9pm, **Sci Fi**. These horror films on SciFi serve a purpose, but we're not sure what that is. This time the culprit is a giant squid with an appetite for human victims. The quartet hunting the big fish contains two young, bikini-clad but brainy co-eds. Our question: How can those hunting the beast enjoy lunching on calamari? SA

**Basic Cable Rankings**

(9/11/06-9/17/06)

**Mon-Sun Prime**

1	ESPN	3	2724
2	USA	2	1847
2	TNT	2	1839
4	DSNY	1.8	1637
5	LIFE	1.5	1385
6	TOON	1.4	1247
7	FOXN	1.3	1140
8	NAN	1.2	1082
8	HALL	1.2	891
10	A&E	1.1	1022
10	TBSC	1.1	987
12	FX	1	944
12	HGTV	1	927
12	DISC	1	887
12	SCIF	1	859
16	HIST	0.9	828
16	MTV	0.9	776
18	SPK	0.8	767
18	VH1	0.8	762
18	AMC	0.8	758
18	TVLD	0.8	742
18	CORT	0.8	728
18	CMDY	0.8	684
24	TLC	0.7	657
24	FAM	0.7	657
24	BRAV	0.7	611
24	FOOD	0.7	600
28	APL	0.6	580
28	CNN	0.6	566
28	BET	0.6	498
28	SOAP	0.6	309
32	ESP2	0.5	497
32	LMN	0.5	281
34	MSNB	0.4	371
34	EN	0.4	365
34	TTC	0.4	352
34	HLN	0.4	344
34	WGNC	0.4	292
34	NGC	0.4	257
34	GSN	0.4	225
41	CMT	0.3	242
41	OXYG	0.3	230
41	TVGC	0.3	225
41	DHLT	0.3	171
41	TDSN	0.3	161
41	BIO	0.3	132

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

**Troubleshooting Digitally Modulated Signals with a QAM Analyzer**

[hosted web event]

**Title:** Trilithic and Communications Technology are presenting a free Webcast on troubleshooting digitally modulated signals with a QAM analyzer featuring Cisco System's Ron Hranac and Trilithic's Steve Windle.

**Date:** Wednesday, September 27

**Time:** 8 a.m. PST, 11 a.m. EDT, 4 p.m. GMT

To register for the event, please log on at [www.ct-magazine.com](http://www.ct-magazine.com) for more details and information.

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**In the States:** New Mountain West Conference sports network, **The mtn**, has 2 more cable ops on board: **Cable One** (ID and NM) and **Sweetwater Cable** (WY and UT). The deals, signed Thurs, came just in time for Boise State-Wyoming's Sat game. Still no deals with **Cox**, **Time Warner**, **DirectTV** or **DISH Net** though. The mtn counts 12 providers in 5 states, including partner **Comcast**.

**Kaitz Wrap:** While the identities of the 14 companies that responded to the **NAMIC** employment survey are secret, **Scripps** is one of them. In a video interview for our soon-to-launch Cable360.net Web site, Scripps exec **Lenore Washington-Graham** confirmed her company's participation. Other video interviewees said **NAMIC** must educate cable execs that the survey isn't painful and takes just hours to complete.

**Trademark Watch:** Poor **Comcast**. It can't file a trademark these days without a reporter sniffing around. Ah, the curse of being the largest MSO... **McNews** picked up **Fri** on its recent trademarking of "Anyplay" for portable media players. A few weeks ago, **Cfax** wrote about Comcast trademarking "Ziddeo" and "Ziddio" for a video broadcasting service over the Internet (**Cfax**, 8/28). Only time will tell if we actually see the products come to market, but it's fun to guess... We expect to see more of these type of trademark filings as Comcast Interactive Media considers its opportunities.

**Carriage:** **Horry Telephone Co-op** launched **Turner South** on its basic tier in the Myrtle Beach, SC, area.

**Ratings:** **Discovery Channel's** Wed special "Mythbusters: Mega Movie Myths" earned a 2.2 HH rating, the highest-rated series telecast to date.

**Public Affairs:** **CSTV's Fields & Dreams Foundation** began Sun, in conjunction with Conference USA and the Dallas All Sports Assoc, offering 10 SAT tutorial classes to 50 Dallas-area students.

**Business/Finance:** **Standard & Poor's Ratings Services** downgraded **Fri** the credit ratings on **Charter Comm** and subsidiary **Charter Comm Holdings** to 'SD' from 'CCC+', and reassigned the corporate credit ratings on the pair, at 'CCC+' with a negative outlook. It also lowered the rating to 'D' on Charter's \$862.5mln convertible notes and on an aggregate \$1.66bln of Charter Holdings notes with maturities from '09 to '12. They were the objects of exchange offers that were tantamount to a default on the original terms, S&P said.

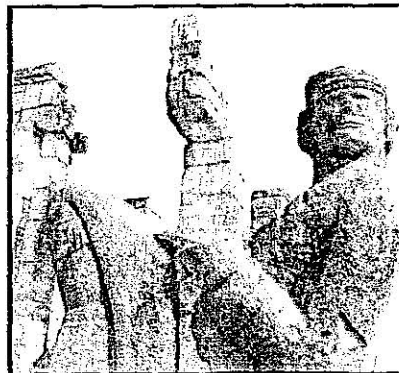
**Oops:** **Emma Bowen** intern/Kaitz speaker **Alfonso Rosales** is a production coordinator at **Discovery's Travel Channel**—our apologies!

**Ed's Note:** **Fri's** ratings chart reflected the kids 6-11 demo. Below is the correct HH ranking.

**Basic Cable Rankings**  
(9/04/06-9/10/06)  
Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.7	2484
2	DSNY	2.2	1984
3	USA	2	1823
4	ESPN	1.9	1762
5	LIFE	1.5	1403
6	TOON	1.4	1299
7	TBSC	1.2	1102
7	A&E	1.2	1079
7	FOXN	1.2	1062
10	NAN	1.1	1036
10	HGTV	1.1	1035
10	FX	1.1	1018
10	SCIF	1.1	943
10	HALL	1.1	849
15	DISC	1	961
15	AMC	1	907
17	SPK	0.9	855
17	MTV	0.9	813
17	CORT	0.9	787
17	HIST	0.9	776
21	CNN	0.8	753
21	TLC	0.8	745
21	TVLD	0.8	740
24	ESP2	0.7	676
24	VH1	0.7	668
24	CMDY	0.7	659
24	APL	0.7	652
24	FOOD	0.7	597
24	BRAV	0.7	567
30	FAM	0.6	590
30	BET	0.6	514
30	LMN	0.6	304
33	EN	0.5	407
33	SOAP	0.5	287
35	TTC	0.4	387
35	MSNB	0.4	348

Nielsen Data Supplied by ABC/Disney



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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Not Your Father's News

**ESPNEWS** on Fri launched an enhanced programming lineup – a 10th anniversary (Nov 1) makeover of sorts – that includes new shows and greater consistency of air times. The changes don't alter the net's philosophy of being the primary destination for sports news and highlights, but they do offer "more brand exposure and identity, and a little more definition," said sr coord prod, studio prod **Barry Sacks**. The modifications weren't a response to languishing viewership either, said svp/mng ed, studio production **Mark Gross**. "Life is good on ESPNEWS. We just had the highest rated Aug ever and we are now in more than 50m homes," he said. Now entering those homes are 3 weekday programs – "Pregame," "Gametime," and "Postgame" – that set up the sports landscape, offer updated news, and wrap up the night's action, respectively. "Postgame" also includes a Mon special providing analysis following the "Monday Night Football" game. "College Football Overdrive" also adds to the football frenzy, providing within a 5-hour (3-8pm) Sat block coverage of nationwide games with live game cut-ins, press conferences and studio analysis to provide a welcoming home base where fans can get augmented news about every game. "Most people turn back and forth (between games and the net), we understand that," said Sacks. "This is red zone TV for fans." Broadened **NASCAR** coverage going forward will ease the net's current football centricity, but other sports won't garner the same attention, he said. A major marketing initiative for ESPNEWS across family platforms is expected early next year.

**Highlights:** "Legends: Rodney Dangerfield," Sun, 9pm, **Comedy**. We're *Dangerfield* fans, still we think subs will enjoy this love letter to the dis-respected one. Interviews with today's comedians (*Romano*, *Seinfeld*, *Rock*, *Foxworthy*, *Roseanne* et al) and vintage clips create a portrait beyond the man best known now for films. – "Koppel on Discovery: The Price of Security," Sun, 8pm, **Discovery**. We saw only a rough cut, sans a town hall meeting *Koppel* that will run live Sun, but *Koppel's* thoughtful approach, interviewing savvy and access shows promise. Instead of the obvious (Are we safer today than on 9/11/01?), he examines conditions surrounding that safety, particularly the alleged policy of torture practiced on detainees at Guantanamo. *Koppel's* not a banger, a la "60 Minutes." His "gotcha" is subtle, yet his piercing of the Guantanamo chief is brilliant, leaving the Rear Admiral flummoxed and arguing that sleep deprivation, extreme noise and temperature, isolation and distressed positions don't constitute torture. – "Ivy Dreams," Wed, 8pm, ET, **AZN**. Like anxiety? Watch this doc about 4 Asian-American HS seniors being pushed by intense parents, or pushing themselves, to Ivy League schools. SA

**Worth a Look:** "The Mermaid Chair," tomorrow, Sun & Mon, 9pm, **Lifetime**. For men it's *Kim Basinger*, for ladies it's forbidden love and a mother who protests the digital era. – "The Underground," Thurs, 10pm, **Showtime**. Warning: subs may call on this *Damon Wayans* sketch series, which aims to shock, but has funny moments. Consistent laughs come from "Def Comedy Jam," (Sun, 11pm, **HBO**). SA

### Basic Cable Rankings

(8/28/06-9/03/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.6	2387
2	ESPN	2.2	2074
2	DSNY	2.2	1972
4	MTV	1.6	1427
5	LIFE	1.4	1314
5	TOON	1.4	1306
7	USA	1.3	1212
7	SCIF	1.3	1174
7	HALL	1.3	957
10	TBSC	1.2	1096
11	HGTV	1.1	1027
11	DISC	1.1	1016
11	SPK	1.1	1000
11	FOXN	1.1	982
15	FX	1	918
15	NAN	1	889
17	A&E	0.9	822
17	AMC	0.9	801
17	FAM	0.9	798
17	TVLD	0.9	783
21	HIST	0.8	773
21	CNN	0.8	735
23	ESP2	0.7	679
23	CMDY	0.7	657
23	CORT	0.7	650
23	FOOD	0.7	637
23	TLC	0.7	618
23	BRAV	0.7	555
23	LMN	0.7	335
30	VH1	0.6	555
30	BET	0.6	486
30	SOAP	0.6	331
33	APL	0.5	491
33	NGC	0.5	281
35	TWC	0.4	392
35	EN	0.4	370
35	TTC	0.4	362

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Chad Heiges and Seth Arenstein

## Tackling Katrina

Like it or not, sports is a major part of the American ethos, and FSN's doc "Eye of the Storm" (Sun, 9pm ET) does a fantastic job of regionalizing this concept in the face of tragedy. Amid a passel of programming on the lingering effects from Hurricane Katrina, the doc illustrates how invaluable the LSU football team was in helping Louisianans cope after the storm. "This is less about the downside of the storm and more an examination of an uplifting story," said FSN pres *Bob Thompson*. *John Goodman* narrates the emotional tale that spans 1 year in the team's life, from Katrina's landfall last Aug 29 to Sat's LSU '06 season opener. The LSU Tigers remained a beacon of strength for the devastated state, even as their Baton Rouge home, although 80 miles from New Orleans, was directly impacted. Several players' families were endangered by the storm, with one losing contact with his own for days. The school's basketball facility was transformed into a triage unit, and deceased bodies became a common campus sight. The team's '05 schedule was delayed, its 1st game moved to AZ. Yet the team forged ahead, determined to fortify the stricken, if only during a series of 3-hour football games. "The team gave back more than anyone could've imagined," said exec prod *Dan Klein*. "The region continues to struggle, and this project gives a sense of the human spirit, of people coming together." Among those who took solace in the "purple and gold" was politico *James Carville*, who passionately displays his loyalty to LSU football and tells of the inextricable link between the team and its state. Other characters include a poignant LSU student, the school's AD, and a former New Orleans restaurateur who lost everything to the storm -- and hasn't missed a Tiger game in 24 years. *CH*

**Highlights:** "Metal of Honor," Tues, 9pm, Spike TV. Terrific, first-hand account of the 9/11 clean-up, told emotionally by iron workers who did the job for nearly 9 months. -- "Nip/Tuck," season 4 premiere, Tues, 10pm, FX. Finally, that carver scare is over and the surgeons return to normal; for Dr Troy that means episodic TV's best sex (love the opening threeway). Yet the series is back, telling edgy stories and beautifully mixing music, scenery and guests (*Brooke Shields*, *Larry Hagman*, *Sanaa Lathan* & others). -- "Where Did It Come From?" Thurs, 8pm, History. Simple concept, but excellently done, physicist *Michael Guillen* asks basic Q's, like how did the ancient Greeks' shipbuilding prowess influence modern tankers? Remember Archimedes? SA

**Worth a Look:** "Go Pro or Go Home," Sun, 8pm ET, CSTV. Give CSTV props for focusing the spotlight on female athletes--here 16 top college volleyballers shooting for the pro beach circuit. Nicely done. -- "Dick Cavett Show," Thurs, 8pm ET, TCM. Classic Cavett with *Hitchcock*, *Hepburn* et al (and their films) follow next week's new ep with *Mel Brooks*, who'd be funny reading the phonebook. -- "Relative Chaos," Mon, 8pm, ABC F. Ignore *Terry Bradshaw* and the silly sibling rivalry, focus on the un-Hollywood love story. -- "THS: Michael J. Fox," Mon, 8pm, E! Yes, we know, but this one's done extremely well. SA

### Basic Cable Rankings

(7/31/06-8/27/06)

Mon-Sun Prime			
1	DSNY	2.5	2174
2	USA	2.4	2186
3	TNT	2.2	2027
4	LIFE	1.6	1446
5	ESPN	1.5	1391
6	TOON	1.4	1261
6	TBSC	1.4	1259
6	FOXN	1.4	1207
9	HALL	1.3	965
10	NAN	1.2	1058
11	A&E	1.1	958
11	HGTV	1.1	955
11	SCIF	1.1	937
14	DISC	1	895
14	SPK	1	887
14	FX	1	849
17	MTV	0.9	850
17	HIST	0.9	845
17	CMDY	0.9	805
17	AMC	0.9	802
17	TVLD	0.9	748
22	CNN	0.8	759
22	FAM	0.8	754
22	CORT	0.8	667
25	TLC	0.7	647
25	FOOD	0.7	605
25	BRAV	0.7	534
25	LMN	0.7	332
29	VH1	0.6	582
29	BET	0.6	502
29	SOAP	0.6	315
32	APL	0.5	486
32	ESP2	0.5	486
32	NGC	0.5	279
35	EN	0.4	392
35	TTC	0.4	362
35	CMT	0.4	329
35	MSNB	0.4	314

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

## Cable's Hispanic Heritage

It's not an ideal situation for Spanish-themed channels on cable. "There are 400 or so American channels and just 32 Hispanic channels for the fastest-growing sector of the American population," says *Ariela Nerubay*, vp, marketing & sales, **TuTV**. Yet Nerubay and others admit "the consumer is in a better place now [regarding Hispanic offerings] than a few years ago." More reasons for optimism are recent additions of **The History Channel en Espanol** to **Cox San Diego's** Paquete Latino digital tier and to **Cablevision's** iO espanol service in NYC and bits of NJ. The timing couldn't be better. Hispanic Heritage Month begins Sept 15 and History Channel en Espanol (26m HNs) is responding with an initiative fronted by handsome *Carlos Ponce* (Carlos Rivera on "7th Heaven") and featuring a lineup of US Spanish-language premieres designed to highlight the richness of Latino history and current culture. On the rich side is a history of *Don Quixote* (Sept 15, 8pm) that not only examines the man from La Mancha but also discusses how *Cervantes* penned the story. "This is programming that lets viewers flex their intellectual muscles, delight in the richness of their history and hopefully inspires them to delve deeper into it," the channel's programming director *Marlene Braga* says. In contrast to the beautiful Quixote story is "State of Fear" (Sept 18, 8pm), a doc about Peru's murderous Shining Path. These shows are also exemplary of what Braga likes to do on the channel year-round. The US Hispanic experience is "the collision of worlds," she says, marrying Hispanic traditions with American culture. Of course History's HHM initiative is aimed at driving sales of Hispanic tiers, so there are strategic partnerships, like the one that gives customers who sign up for the Spanish tier a 6-month subscription to *People en Espanol*. SA

**Highlights:** "Vietnam Nurses with Dana Delany," tonight, 10 ET, **WE**. Forget Dana (can't believe we said that); the best part are stories of how young women survived Vietnam as military nurses. - "On Native Soil," Mon, 9pm, **Court TV**. Hard-hitting review of 9/11. - "Stargate SG-1," ep 200, tonight, 8, **SciFi**. Loyal fans won't miss it, but fun for newbies, too. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Covershot," tonight, 10, **TLC**. Yet another complete makeover show, but supermodel/host *Frederique* eases the pain. - "Breaking Up with Shannen Doherty," Tues, 10pm, **Oxygen**. The male of the couple Shannen helps break up belongs in the chauvinist hall of fame. - "Kappa Mikey," Sun, 11am, **Nick**. Love the title, "Lost in Transportation." - "Mystery Woman: Oh Baby," tomorrow, 9pm, **Hallmark**. Good mystery and ironic since star *Kellie Martin* is preppers herself. - "Egyptian Book of the Dead," Tues, 8pm **History**. Interesting process story about finding religion's 1st written description. - "When The Levees Broke," Mon, Tues, 9pm, **HBO**. Definitive and critical look at Katrina from *Spike Lee*. - "Katrina Anniversary Special," Sun, 8pm, **Weather**. Interesting look at New Orleans today, but very little pure weather content. SA

### Basic Cable Rankings

(8/07/06-8/13/06)

Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.4	2185
1	USA	2.4	2152
3	DSNY	2.3	2045
4	LIFE	1.5	1342
5	FOXN	1.4	1284
5	TOON	1.4	1274
7	NAN	1.3	1133
7	HALL	1.3	971
9	TBSC	1.2	1124
9	A&E	1.2	1046
11	ESPN	1.1	978
11	HGTV	1.1	953
13	HIST	1	916
13	SCIF	1	899
13	AMC	1	898
13	CMDY	1	878
17	MTV	0.9	849
17	DISC	0.9	840
17	FAM	0.9	836
17	SPK	0.9	831
17	FX	0.9	793
17	TVLD	0.9	759
23	CNN	0.8	753
23	CORT	0.8	658
25	TLC	0.7	650
25	FOOD	0.7	620
25	LMN	0.7	334
28	VH1	0.6	571
28	BET	0.6	513
28	BRAV	0.6	494
28	APL	0.6	493
28	SOAP	0.6	325
33	EN	0.5	427
33	WGNC	0.5	325
33	OXYG	0.5	320
36	ESP2	0.4	378
36	TTC	0.4	350
36	MSNB	0.4	309
36	CMT	0.4	304
36	NGC	0.4	232
36	GSN	0.4	213
36	BIO	0.4	145
43	HLN	0.3	276
43	TVGC	0.3	236
43	TWC	0.3	232

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

### The Extended Forecast

**Terry Connelly**, svp and gm of **The Weather Channel**, is launching more original programming this fall than in his 7-plus years at the network combined. It all begins with the channel's coverage of Katrina's anniversary, which will feature 10 days of related programming starting with a special "Storm Stories" Aug 20. A team of meteorologists then goes live each night to retrace Katrina's path from landfall (Aug 25 in FL) to hitting LA on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Connelly is proudest of specials running Aug 27. "Post-mark Katrina" (8pm) recounts how postal workers in the Gulf Coast waded through mud and rubble to deliver mail. At 9pm, "It Could Happen Tomorrow: The Lost Episode" updates the 'what if' series' uncanny pilot, which predicted before Katrina that a hurricane would hit New Orleans and devastate the region. On Sept 25 at 8, the channel returns to the crescent city to launch a live nightly series, "Abrams and Bettes Beyond the Forecast." For its premiere, *Mike Bettes* will report from New Orleans as the Saints take on the Hurricanes and return to the Super Dome (ESPN's MNF will be inside the Dome). Abrams and Bettes marks the first time Weather will feature a host-branded show. In other firsts, it will incorporate viewers via text messaging, live polling, user-created video and a blog by its hosts. There's even talk of a webcam (so viewers can see Abrams and Bettes before 8pm) and a looser format. "We'll have more time to talk and react instead of just reading the prompter and going to the wall," says Abrams. Another of the channel's rising stars will follow their debut when "The Climate Code with Dr Heidi Cullen" premieres Oct 1, attempting to make Weather the source for climate and environment info. SB

**Highlights:** "Macbeth," Sun, 7pm ET, 8:30PT, **BBC America**. The 2nd of **BBC A's** updated *Shakespeare* quartet is tough on the American ear early on, but hold on, it's worth it. — "Hitchcocked," tonight, 8, **Encore Mystery**. A worthy addition to docs about the master; begins a marathon of *Hitch's* films. — "Countdown to Ground Zero," Sun, & "The Miracle of Stairwell B," Mon, 8pm, **History**. Quite a bit of overlap, yet compelling accounts of 9/11. — "Death of Kevin Carter," Thurs, 7pm, **Cinemax**. The finale of Academy Award-nominated shorts; this one's about an intense photographer in volatile S Africa. SA

**Worth a Look:** "The Ron Clark Story," Sun, 8pm, **TNT**. It's sappy, derivative and predictable, but it works, even more if you like *Matthew Perry*. — "Weeds," season II premiere, Mon, 10pm, **Showtime**. Hasn't mellowed or lost its wit. — "1-Minute Soaps," Mon, **SoapNet**. We're glad this 6-pt micro-series is back; silly, but fun and loaded with soap-specific cliffhangers. — "Parco, PI," season II premiere, Tues, 10pm, **Court TV**. Fortunately, sticks to the cases and minimizes *Parco's* uninteresting family. — "Ron Popeil" Tues, 9pm, **Biography**. But, wait, there's more—apparently not too much if **Bio Channel** is chronicling the infomercial king. — "Style Star" Sun, 10pm, **Style**. Eva Mendes has it. —SA

**Notable:** "Little League World Series," tonight, 7pm, **ESPN**.

#### Basic Cable Rankings (7/31/06-8/06/06)

	Mon-Sun Prime	
1	USA 2.4	2141
2	DSNY 2.2	1974
3	TNT 2	1859
4	TBSC 1.6	1441
5	LIFE 1.5	1348
6	NAN 1.4	1225
6	HALL 1.4	1034
8	TOON 1.3	1208
8	FOXN 1.3	1184
10	DISC 1.1	1044
10	ESPN 1.1	980
12	SPK 1	882
12	HGTV 1	881
12	MTV 1	867
12	SCIF 1	851
16	AMC 0.9	813
16	A&E 0.9	809
16	FX 0.9	776
16	HIST 0.9	772
16	TVLD 0.9	756
21	FAM 0.8	739
21	CNN 0.8	733
21	CMDY 0.8	712
21	CORT 0.8	660
25	VH1 0.7	666
25	TLC 0.7	644
25	FOOD 0.7	593
25	BET 0.7	546
29	ESP2 0.6	527
29	BRAV 0.6	509
29	LMN 0.6	326
29	SOAP 0.6	291
33	APL 0.5	470
33	EN 0.5	426
33	CMT 0.5	381
33	NGC 0.5	303
37	TTC 0.4	363
37	GSN 0.4	259
39	MSNB 0.3	300
39	TWC 0.3	270
39	HLN 0.3	244
39	WGNC 0.3	237
39	SC 0.3	235
39	TVGC 0.3	230
39	OXYG 0.3	192
39	DHLT 0.3	191

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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RAINBOW



## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

### The Fight Club

Maybe it's the heat wave—or maybe it's just us—but cable sure seems in a scrappy mood. And we're not just talking about retrans battles, the buzz at this week's **ACA/NCTC Independent Show**, or the face-off between **Time Warner Cable** and **NFL Network** that the **FCC** yesterday refereed. Programmers are getting into the swing (so to speak) too. Besides sparring stalwarts **HBO** and **Showtime**, **ESPN's** fight nights, **WWE's** slamdowns and the **UFC** on **Spike TV**, **OLN** enters the ring via its recent boxing deal with **Top Rank**. The soon-to-be-**Versus** next week carries its second prime time bout: the **World Boxing Council (WBC) Light Flyweight Championship**, slated for a live telecast from Las Vegas Thurs. Startup **MavTV** (on **Charter** and **FIOS**) debuts **TNT** pro wrestling next month. In the non-fiction arena, a pair of specials explores the art and science of delivering body blows. **National Geographic Channel** puts a range of martial artists to the test in "Fight Science" (Aug 20), in which a crash test dummy is pummeled with kung fu and other deadly arts. While that special's all boys, **Oxygen** invites women to get their kicks with "Fight Girls" Mon (see review below). It shows the grueling training of 7 Americans in Thai boxing, with 3 competing in Thailand for the world championship belt. And if that's not enough bone-crunching, there's at least three all-fightin' networks vying for carriage: **Blackbelt TV**, which has a **Comcast** and **FIOS** deal under its belt; the **Martial Arts Channel**, which last month launched on broadband; and aptly named **Fight Network**, a north-of-the-border programmer with Canadian cable carriage and a **Verizon** mobile deal here. **SB**

**Highlights:** "Much Ado About Nothing," Sun, 7pm ET/8:30PT, **BBC Am**. Based on *Shakespeare's* plot, but an excellent update; great cast, too, headed by "Band of Bros" star *Damian Lewis* and "Viva Blackpool's" *Sarah Parish*. -- "God Sleeps in Rwanda," Thurs, 7pm, **Cinemax**. Short doc proposes a sliver of hope for post-genocide Rwanda as women gain in stature and slowly rebuild the ravaged nation. **SA**

**Worth a Look:** "Footballers Wives: Overtime," Sun, 10pm ET, 10:30 PT, **BBC Am**. The spin-off of the original's not bad, but we miss *Tanya*; still, good warm-up for a new installment of our guilty pleasure "Mile High" (10:30pm ET). -- "3 Moons Over Milford," Sun, 8pm, **ABC Family**. Good premise—the world could end imminently, so townspeople live for the moment; pilot's promising, let's see more. -- "Fight Girls," Mon, 9pm, **Oxygen**. Unusual programming choice from **Oxygen**, but generally it works, particularly when the film about 3 American women training in the martial art of Muay Thai sheds its reality series feel and examines their dedication and guts. -- "Love Soup," Tues, 10pm ET, **BBC Am**. Quirky series about two 30-somethings and their disappointing love lives. -- "The Business," tonight, 11:30pm, **IFC**. Good try, but this spoof of the movie biz demonstrates how hard it is to do comedy; "Jackie Woodman" (11pm, **IFC**) shows it even more. **SA**

**Not Reviewed:** "Everyone Stares: The Police Inside Out," Sun, 8:30pm, **Showtime**. Culled from the trio's home movies. -- "Metalocalypse," Sun, 11:45pm, **Cartoon**.

#### Basic Cable Rankings

(6/26/06-7/30/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.4	2204
2	DSNY	2.3	2009
3	TNT	2	1826
4	TBSC	1.4	1308
4	LIFE	1.4	1262
4	FOXN	1.4	1221
4	HALL	1.4	1021
8	TOON	1.3	1182
8	NAN	1.3	1158
10	ESPN	1.2	1131
11	AMC	1.1	1000
12	FX	1	923
12	SPK	1	922
12	MTV	1	877
12	HGTV	1	857
12	SCIF	1	848
17	DISC	0.9	852
17	FAM	0.9	818
17	HIST	0.9	812
17	A&E	0.9	806
17	CMDY	0.9	764
17	TVLD	0.9	746
17	BET	0.9	709
24	CNN	0.8	722
24	CORT	0.8	693
26	FOOD	0.7	628
26	TLC	0.7	616
26	LMN	0.7	354
29	SOAP	0.6	282
30	APL	0.5	486
30	VH1	0.5	462
30	ESP2	0.5	453
30	BRAV	0.5	419
34	EN	0.4	393
34	TTC	0.4	346
34	CMT	0.4	291
34	WGNC	0.4	279
34	GSN	0.4	235
34	NGC	0.4	228
40	MSNB	0.3	290
40	TWC	0.3	248
40	HLN	0.3	246
40	TVGC	0.3	236
40	OXYG	0.3	214
40	DHLT	0.3	206
40	SC	0.3	180

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein**The Ultimate Reality TV**

We've been to many cable events, but few penetrated as deeply as a screening this week on Capitol Hill of A&E's "Combat Diaries: The Marines of Lima Company." It's opinion to say Diaries is a great war doc and that cable ops should hold special screenings and make schools aware of A&E's free study guide ([www.aetv.com/class/](http://www.aetv.com/class/)). It's not a stretch to call the Emmy-nominated piece one of the truest video depictions of war, since much of it comes from footage shot in-country by Lima Company, whose videocameras ran throughout, even during fighting. "We didn't know we were going to make this film," dir Michael Epstein said. "We thought it would be a little footage [from the Marines] and then mostly interviews." That plan inverted when Epstein and boyhood friend/exec prod Jonathan Yellen saw Lima's homemade footage. Epstein's eye is that of a veteran filmmaker. Yellen's view is of a retired Marine, active in the 1st Iraq war. Unfortunately Lima Company's notoriety stems from the extreme punishment it absorbed; 23 Marines died during its 7-mo deployment. The parents of 1 attended the screening, as did Marines and House members. The film's strength is its mix of the Marines' video with its own footage to chronicle the 23. We see them at work in Iraq, but parents, wives and children recall them, as do Marine buddies, many fighting tears. The film's honesty scores; a young Marine asks why Iraqis are shooting at him. We're here to help, he says. Another questions their fame. This film wouldn't have been made if 23 hadn't lost their lives, he argues bitterly. Another says he cooperated with the film to show how his buddies lived, otherwise he didn't approve of it. — Co-host Comcast and A&E donated \$10K to the **Armed Forces Foundation** in honor of Lima Co "and for those who are no longer here," A&E's Libby O'Connell said. SA

**Highlight:** "Nightmares & Dreamscapes," Wed, 9pm, TNT. The Stephen King-based series ends strong, as golf, horror and sex get a rise out of Richard Thomas in "Autopsy Rm 4." -- "Dirty Jobs: Jobs That Bite," Sun, 9pm, Discovery. Good synergy, combining Mike Rowe and "Shark Week;" this job's more dangerous than dirty. -- "The Mushroom Club," Thurs, 7pm, Cinemax. Difficult look at Hiroshima's scars. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Secret Lives of Women," Tues, 10pm ET, WE. Good intro to self injuring, but it implies wrongly that 'cutting' is limited to poorly educated, less-affluent women. -- "Starface" & "Chain Reaction," T-Sat, 9 & 9:30pm, GSN. Rich Cronin's prime time search may be over, particularly with associated-word game "Chain." -- "Feasting on Asphalt," tomorrow, 9pm, Food. Insightfully delicious: Alton Brown & road food. SA

**The High Court:** It's a loss for independence, integrity and especially public affairs as Ellen Schned departs Court TV today; Bob Rose, too, is gone. It's pointless to complain that this talented duo is out, as are many others. Instead, we'll remember Ellen and Bob beaming, as they clung to the Golden Beacon just months ago. Surely cable must be less fun without them. We trust it'll be a short stretch. SA

## Basic Cable Rankings

(7/17/06-7/23/06)

## Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2.7	2364
2	USA	2.4	2205
3	TNT	2.0	1853
4	TBSC	1.7	1529
4	FOXN	1.7	1488
6	TOON	1.4	1214
6	HALL	1.4	1012
8	LIFE	1.3	1223
8	NAN	1.3	1132
10	SCIF	1.2	999
11	ESPN	1.1	1013
11	SPK	1.1	1007
13	MTV	1.0	889
13	FAM	1.0	860
15	HIST	0.9	850
15	CNN	0.9	843
15	HGTV	0.9	832
15	FX	0.9	821
15	A&E	0.9	810
15	AMC	0.9	800
15	CMDY	0.9	780
15	DISC	0.9	776
23	TVLD	0.8	715
23	TLC	0.8	687
23	CORT	0.8	680
23	LMN	0.8	387
27	FOOD	0.7	610
27	BET	0.7	576
29	APL	0.6	532
29	VH1	0.6	526
29	SOAP	0.6	282
32	ESP2	0.5	434
32	BRAV	0.5	428
32	EN	0.5	409
32	WGNC	0.5	323
36	TTC	0.4	370
36	MSNB	0.4	332
36	GSN	0.4	260
36	NGC	0.4	248
40	TWC	0.3	277
40	HLN	0.3	263
40	TVGC	0.3	248
40	CMT	0.3	245
40	OXYG	0.3	237
40	OLN	0.3	228
40	DHLT	0.3	208

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

## Cable's Comic-Con-nection

When the cast of HBO's "Entourage" hit San Diego's Comic-Con last season, it was more than just a wacky backdrop for Vince Chase to plug "Aquaman." It was an acknowledgement that the nation's biggest annual celebration of comic books and pop culture had become a key marketing venue for the entertainment industry. This year's convention, which runs through Sunday, has IFC and ABC Family (promoting "Kyle XY" and "Fallen") as sponsors. Others hyping their wares to more than 100K fans include Sci Fi (plugging "Who Wants to Be a Superhero?") and USA ("The 4400.") Cartoon Network, Adult Swim, MTV and Nickelodeon are also there. Tonight G4 kicks off coverage of the festivities with its first live 2-hr "Attack of the Show" broadcast from Comic-Con. Attendees will get a sneak peek at G4's "Happy Tree Friends" series along with a co-branded Toyota Yaris car. G4's Comic-Con specials Mon and Tue will be followed by VOD packages beginning Aug 4. "Between linear TV and non-linear—online, podcasting and VOD—Comic-Con is huge for us," G4 president Neal Tiles says. "We're not covering it as a spectacle, but as an insider." SB

**Highlights:** "Who Wants To Be A Superhero?" Thurs, 9pm, SciFi. Sure it's camp, but this reality contest featuring ordinary folk in tights is a hoot. 84-yr-old comic book legend Stan Lee is perfect as judge & jury. -- "Golden Age of Norman Corwin," Thurs, 7pm, Cinemax. Those younger than 70 won't know radio writer Corwin, which is an excellent reason to watch this 40-min film. -- "Life on Mars," Mon, 10pm, BBC A. A murder mystery with a brilliant twist, the detective's been transported to the 70s; can you dig it? -- "Fallen," Sun, 8pm, ABC Family. Another entry from ABC F about a teen with extraordinary powers—the kid's an angel—but a warning: "Touched by an Angel" it ain't. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Tabloid Wars," Mon, 9pm, Bravo. A process show (follows (NY) Daily News writers & editors), but well done. -- "Sexual Healing," tonight, 10, Showtime. Once you get over couples exposing their sexual woes on TV, it can be educational. -- "The Messengers," Sun, 10pm, TLC. Who can give the best speech contest. -- "Design Star," Sun, 9pm, HGTV. Interesting twists on the home makeover show; very un-HGTV, but fun. -- "The Aristocrats," Wed, 11pm, HBO. Foul-mouthed look at a legendary dirty joke. -- "Stand Up or Shut Up," tonight, 7:50, Starz Comedy. Wish we received more eps of these 10-min vignettes chronicling a class for comedians; seems promising. -- "Work Out," Tues, 10pm, Bravo. The trainers and gym owner are the stars, but for us it's an incentive to exercise. -- "Decades Rock Live," tonight, 8, VH1. New papa Elvis Costello still has pipes. -- "Garth Marengi's Darkplace" and "Screw-On Head," Thurs, 10 & 10:30pm, Sci Fi. From the what-the-heck-was-that? dept: "Garth" is a British spoof of sci fi, while "Screw-On" is animated with the voices of Paul Giamatti and David Hyde Pierce. Beyond that, we're not sure. -- "1 Wk to Save Your Marriage," Mon, 10pm, TLC. Lots of bickering. SA

### Basic Cable Rankings

(7/10/06-7/16/06)

Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.9	2591
2	DSNY	2.2	1907
3	TNT	2	1854
4	ESPN	1.5	1391
4	FOXN	1.5	1362
4	LIFE	1.5	1333
4	HALL	1.5	1084
8	TBSC	1.4	1300
9	TOON	1.3	1191
9	NAN	1.3	1175
11	DISC	1.1	967
11	SCIF	1.1	957
13	SPK	1	899
13	MTV	1	891
13	HGTV	1	885
13	AMC	1	879
13	FX	1	878
18	FAM	0.9	839
18	HIST	0.9	822
18	CNN	0.9	783
18	TVLD	0.9	760
22	A&E	0.8	752
22	CMDY	0.8	723
22	CORT	0.8	696
22	BET	0.8	643
26	TLC	0.7	617
26	FOOD	0.7	614
26	ESP2	0.7	590
26	LMN	0.7	363
30	APL	0.6	492
30	BRAV	0.6	479
30	SOAP	0.6	282
33	VH1	0.5	490
33	EN	0.5	406
35	TTC	0.4	342
35	WGNC	0.4	265
35	OXYG	0.4	253
35	NGC	0.4	238
35	GSN	0.4	230
35	BIO	0.4	135
41	MSNB	0.3	274
41	CMT	0.3	260
41	HLN	0.3	243
41	TVGC	0.3	236
41	TWC	0.3	229
41	DHLT	0.3	207

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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VIDEO: PLAY  
DATA: HOMERUN**

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

## The Meta-Critics Tour

Steve Effros wrote yesterday about "blog blight," a Web-enabled condition where Joe and Jane Citizen share their innermost thoughts with strangers in cyberspace. Nowhere was this affliction more visible this week than at the Ritz-Carlton in Pasadena. That's the high-class holding pen where TV writers were herded into chilly ballrooms to grill network execs and talent hyping their lineups. Although some critics (Aaron Barnhart of *The Kansas City Star*, Tim Goodman of *The San Francisco Chronicle*) are veteran TV bloggers, this week it became clear that blogging is de rigueur across TCA. Typically a mix of gossip and candor, a few of this tour's blogs (Goodman, Lisa de Moraes of *The Washington Post*) are amusing. Most, alas, are boring. And all beg the question: who are they writing for? Their editors, to justify the expense and double their workload (file your story but post what you *really* think on our website)? Hardcore TV fans eager for behind-the-scenes scoop? Each other? Kvetching about press tour of duty isn't new. But now, critics are relieving their boredom by trolling for "blog gold." Those cringe worthy moments occur whenever their prey, the aforementioned talent and execs, let it all hang out. From Mark Cuban sucking on a beer at E!'s poolside party to the color of Spike Lee's socks, precious little went unblogged. With much of the discussion at TCA concerning the impact of technology and the Web on TV, that's not surprising. Cuban said after his HDNet panel with Dan Rather that it's time for everyone to get over themselves—and the Web. See his argument at (where else?) blogmaverick.com. SB

**Highlights:** "Global Warming," Sun, 9pm, **Discovery**. Best part in the Tom Brokaw-hosted special is when it shows NYC is among the nation's least polluting cities (few cars, much public transport) and how Americans can significantly reduce CO2 output without radical changes (unplug appliances that have standby modes). — "Revelation," Sun, 9pm, **Nat Geo**. There's a lot packed into this look at John's "Book of Revelation" yet the question remains—was it an allegory or a literal description of destiny? — "Fabulous!" Sun, 10pm, **IFC**. A history of watersheds in gay-lesbian cinema, supplemented with John Waters interviews. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Mo'nique's F.A.T. Chance," tomorrow, 8pm, **Oxygen**. The 10 finalists in season 2 of Mo'nique's plus-size pageant cement the idea that beauty has variety (we loved the convicted felon entrant). — "Squirrel Boy," tonight, 7, **Cartoon**. A visual throwback to the rich Warner Bros cartoons, but with the feel of Garfield, as Rodney the squirrel doesn't realize he's meant to be a pet. — "Nightmares & Dreamscapes," Wed, 9pm, **TNT**. Ep 3 ("Umney's Last Case") of the Stephen King short stories series is the best thus far, with William H. Macy time traveling. — "Angela's Eyes," Sun, 10pm, **Lifetime**. Sure, critics ripped this rip-off of "Monk" and "Psych," but it's Lifetime's slickest, darkest series and so earns points from us, plus Abigail Spencer's gorgeous. — "Stargate SG1 & Atlantis," tonight, 9, 10pm, **Sci Fi**. Still strong after many years. — "Cedric the Entertainer," tomorrow, 10pm, **HBO**. Amusing—best bit is his comparisons of black and white TV. SA

### Basic Cable Rankings

(7/03/06-7/09/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.3	2095
2	DSNY	2.2	1896
3	TNT	2	1772
4	LIFE	1.4	1264
4	HALL	1.4	1033
6	TBSC	1.3	1156
7	NAN	1.2	1124
7	TOON	1.2	1121
7	AMC	1.2	1032
10	FOXN	1	934
10	FX	1	914
10	ESPN	1	868
10	A&E	1	863
10	HIST	1	854
15	SPK	0.9	820
15	HGTV	0.9	816
15	DISC	0.9	809
15	FAM	0.9	793
15	MTV	0.9	783
20	CMDY	0.8	744
20	TVLD	0.8	731
20	SCIF	0.8	707
20	CORT	0.8	681
24	FOOD	0.7	609
24	CNN	0.7	605
24	BET	0.7	590
27	TLC	0.6	583
27	LMN	0.6	319
29	APL	0.5	474
29	SCAP	0.5	265
31	VH1	0.4	391
31	ESP2	0.4	366
31	EN	0.4	365
31	BRAV	0.4	351
31	TTC	0.4	319
31	CMT	0.4	309
31	WGNC	0.4	267
31	GSN	0.4	212
39	MSNB	0.3	290
39	TVGC	0.3	227
39	HLN	0.3	227
39	SC	0.3	211
39	WE	0.3	191
39	DHLT	0.3	185
39	NGC	0.3	179
39	TDSN	0.3	171

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

### Look, Up on the Web!

Although the \$108m opening for "Superman Returns" didn't set a box office record over July 4th weekend, **Superman Channel** (a video offering in the In2TV section of AOL.com) did boffo on broadband. "We're getting hundreds of thousands of clicks," reports *Eric Frankel*, pres of **Warner Bros** cable distribution, of the man of steel's daily Web feats. Frankel says viewers average more than 10 mins on the limited offering, one of nine themed channels under the In2TV banner, with more to come. Why should cable care? Having licensed more than 3,000 movies and 250 series to 160 networks, the studio is going directly to consumers. That means keeping Internet rights for TV sales where it can. That's how In2TV debuted the documentary "Look, Up in the Sky!" (from "Superman Returns" director *Bryan Singer*) 1 day after it premiered on **A&E**. Later this summer In2TV will add "The Jamie Foxx Show," a WB hit now stripped on **BET**, to its Net stable of 450 series. The studio's free, ad-supported Web video collection isn't exclusive to corporate sibling **AOL**, either. Frankel & co are preparing to pitch In2TV to **Comcast**, **RoadRunner** and other cable high-speed portals, in addition to Web video sites like **Google**, **Yahoo** and **YouTube** (AOL will continue to sell its ads). Warner Bros also sells downloads via **Movielink** and **CinemaNow**, and is testing peer-to-peer distribution with **BitTorrent.com** and **Guba.com**. "It's like if we only had 1 store on the upper west side of Manhattan, we might only get X amount of traffic," Frankel says. "But if we're like a **Banana Republic** and all over the place, we're going to sell a lot more pairs of jeans." *SB*

**Highlights:** "Caught in the Moment," Mon, 9pm, **Animal Planet**. This young duo's enthusiasm for animals is contagious. -- "True Caribbean Pirates," Sun, 8pm, **History**. Capt *Morgan* before he made it big in rum. -- "Chappelle's Show: The Lost Episodes," Sun, **Comedy**. Ironic when *Dave* spoofs his new fame. -- "What's My Line" tomorrow, 9am ET, **GSN**. 2-hr kick off to great idea—classic eps featuring baseball greats like *Mays*, *Mantle* and *Robinson* (daily @3:30 am ET). *SA*

**Worth A Look:** "Nightmares & Dreamscapes," Wed, 9pm, **TNT**. It's difficult not to cheapen *Stephen King's* stories; the opening of this 4-wk series succeeds moderately. -- "Psych," tonight, 10, **USA**. Strong pilot for yet another offbeat cop series (new season of "Monk" begins 9pm); great opening scene. -- "Brotherhood," Sun, 10pm, **Showtime**. Mixes "The Sopranos" with "Rich Man, Poor Man;" still, not bad. -- "Wild Hearts," tomorrow, 9pm, **Hallmark**. *Richard Thomas* with a hint of paunch; more important, it's the 2<sup>nd</sup> good original on **Hallmark** recently. Are we getting soft? -- "Foursome," tomorrow, 9:30pm ET, **Playboy TV**. Get your mind out of the gutter—the title is deceiving—the 4 couple up in this reality dating show. -- "Good Night Show," season 2 premiere, Mon, 6pm ET, **PBS KIDS Sprout**. Nice mix of yoga, crafts and sign language to wind kids down. -- "Not Like Everyone Else," Mon, 9pm, **Lifetime**. Great story falls flat (a HS student is expelled, wrongly, for witchcraft). -- "Counterfeit Goods," Wed, 8pm PT, **Wealth TV**. A well-done look at the multibillion-dollar knockoff industry & useful tips to spot fakes. *SA*

#### Basic Cable Rankings (6/26/06-7/02/06)

Mon-Sun Prime			
1	USA	2.1	1936
2	TNT	2	1816
3	DSNY	1.9	1710
4	AMC	1.6	1424
5	ESPN	1.4	1306
5	NAN	1.4	1234
5	BET	1.4	1150
5	HALL	1.4	1038
9	LIFE	1.3	1157
9	TOON	1.3	1136
9	TBSC	1.3	1132
12	FOXN	1.2	1060
12	FX	1.2	1031
14	SPK	1.1	965
15	HGTV	0.9	827
15	MTV	0.9	821
15	FAM	0.9	788
15	DISC	0.9	784
19	HIST	0.8	762
19	A&E	0.8	759
19	CMDY	0.8	746
19	TVLD	0.8	733
19	CORT	0.8	713
19	SCIF	0.8	677
25	CNN	0.7	679
25	FOOD	0.7	646
25	LMN	0.7	370
28	TLC	0.6	527
28	SOAP	0.6	276
30	ESP2	0.5	484
30	APL	0.5	471
30	VH1	0.5	441
33	BRAV	0.4	345
33	EN	0.4	327
33	GSN	0.4	220
36	TTC	0.3	296
36	TWC	0.3	276
36	MSNB	0.3	270
36	WGNC	0.3	238
36	CMT	0.3	230
36	TVGC	0.3	227
36	OXYG	0.3	222
36	DHLT	0.3	214
36	NGC	0.3	208
36	WE	0.3	180
36	TDSN	0.3	178

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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**JULY 14**

**PROGRAMMER'S PAGE** with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein**AMC Keeps Riding the Broken Trail**

Linda Schupack, SVP of marketing for AMC, uncrossed her fingers into a V for victory this week when the network scored huge ratings for "Broken Trail." Although she couldn't have predicted the numbers—a 7.7 HH rating both nights, the #1 cable telecast for HH delivery and total viewers this year, the second-highest rated cable movie since '95—she knew she had a rare opportunity to create something special for the June 25-26 telecast. With a network of 90% acquired films, she crafted a movie-like campaign around AMC's first-ever original movie. Her multi-million-dollar campaign had one goal: to "sell *Robert Duvall* and *Thomas Haden Church* very simply and eloquently, but very powerfully," she says. Efforts included a studio-like outdoor movie poster that doubled as a print ad, an in-theater movie trailer that became AMC's TV commercial, and tune-in and local spot cable ads that swayed viewers to saddle up and hit the Broken Trail. Spot cable was crucial, says AMC president Ed Carroll, who adds that deciding whether to run the miniseries on a Sat/Sun or Sun/Mon schedule was a tough call. Premiering on a Sunday got Duvall's face on the cover of more than 20 newspaper TV books in major markets. But it took heavy spot cable and cross-channel promotion to remind guys (the target demo) to ignore the bbq and tune in. Carroll says running spots in male-skewing movies, during **World Cup** and other on-air hang-outs for men helped boost BT's Sunday night and avoid the customary 15% drop-off on night two. Up next: a DVD release by Sony. But first: much celebrating out on Long Island this holiday weekend with AMC family and friends. SB

**Highlights:** "Professional Poker Tour," Wed, 9pm, **Travel**. If your subs like watching the world's best, this is it. -- "Instant Beauty Pageant," tonight, 10, **Style**. Simple idea (put random women in a beauty contest) goes a long way. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Desolation Canyon," tomorrow, 9pm, **Hallmark**. This predictable but likeable western with *Patrick Duffy* is the best original we've seen on **Hallmark** in a while, but too much gunplay for family viewing. -- "Take Home Chef," tonight, 8, **TLC**. *Curtis Stone* is the ideal man. The hunky Aussie has a sensitive side and he cooks you dinner. Stone's simple recipes and his looks give **TLC's** 1st prime time cooking series promise. -- "House of Boateng," Thurs, 9pm, **Sundance**. It's not news that reality show stardom often belongs to unusual characters. Brit designer *Ozward Boateng* lets his brightly colored fashions speak for themselves, limiting this series' appeal. -- "Whistler," tonight, 9, **The N**. *Wish The N* had sent more than a highlight reel—this mystery shows promise. -- "Certified," July, **Music Choice On-Demand**. Clever approach for 12-34s, pit artists against each other in dancing, singing and style. First up: *Chris Brown vs Ne-Yo*. -- "American Misfits," Sun, 9pm, **FUEL TV**. Comedy and skateboards—perfect for the 12-24 males demo. -- "Yankeeography: David Cone," tonight, after game, **YES**. Mets could use him even now. SA

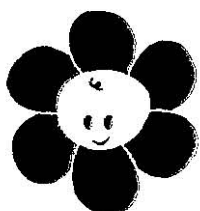
**Basic Cable Rankings**

(6/19/06-6/25/06)

**Mon-Sun Prime**

1	USA	2.3	2039
1	DSNY	2.3	2007
3	TNT	2.1	1929
4	AMC	2	1727
5	LIFE	1.6	1481
6	NAN	1.5	1361
7	SPK	1.3	1136
7	TOON	1.3	1129
9	TBSC	1.2	1103
9	FOXN	1.2	1051
11	HALL	1.1	828
12	ESPN	1	951
12	FX	1	870
12	A&E	1	866
15	HGTV	0.9	842
15	MTV	0.9	838
15	DISC	0.9	814
15	SCIF	0.9	797
15	FAM	0.9	787
15	HIST	0.9	772
21	CMDY	0.8	725
21	ESP2	0.8	721
21	TVLD	0.8	720
21	CORT	0.8	686
25	CNN	0.7	627
25	TLC	0.7	598
25	LMN	0.7	364
28	VH1	0.6	564
28	FOOD	0.6	563
28	BET	0.6	526
28	SOAP	0.6	306
32	APL	0.5	463
32	BRAV	0.5	379
34	EN	0.4	321
34	TTC	0.4	312
34	WGNC	0.4	259
34	DHLT	0.4	243
34	NGC	0.4	226
34	GSN	0.4	218
40	TWC	0.3	299
40	MSNB	0.3	274
40	HLN	0.3	255
40	TVGC	0.3	225
40	CMT	0.3	220
40	SC	0.3	186
40	OXYG	0.3	181

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

### MTVN's Ultimate Fighter

Jordan Schlachter has a thing or 2 in common with Brian Roberts. MTV Networks' vp of affiliate sales/marketing is a gifted athlete who—like Comcast's CEO—was a '05 champ at the Maccabiah Games in Israel. That's where Roberts and the US men's squash team and Schlachter and the US men's basketball team won gold. The 6'6" Schlachter can similarly lay claim to being a broadband savvy guy. He's engineered a first for Comcast and Spike TV around the top-rated (and PPV cash cow) "Ultimate Fighting Championship" mixed martial arts franchise. Tomorrow at 8:30pm, SpikeTV.com and Comcast.net host a simultaneous streaming webcast of a live pre-show to Spike's live "Ultimate Fighter 3" finale at 9. The dualcast will incorporate user-generated content. "We're calling it a 'cam-in' feature," says Schlachter. "It's like a talk radio call-in show. Fans logged onto either site with webcams will be able to interact with the hosts and guests and see their videos incorporated into the webcast." The exclusive webcast (complete with virtual green-room) will drive traffic to both sites and tune-in to Spike's finale, which should beat TUF2's live '05 finale. That telecast earned a 1.9 rating and a 3.3 in Spike's core demo of men 18-34. The sport has been huge this year on PPV, notching up to 350K buys/event. And it's been huge for Spike, where it's the top-rated original series. TUF3 averaged a 1.7 this season, a 2.1 in Spike's broader male 18-39 demo and a 2.89 with men 18-34. "It's a testing ground for us because we're producing a live show, too," Schlachter says of tomorrow's experiment with Comcast. "This is our first opportunity to give fans even more content than ever before." —SB

**Highlights:** "Science of Superman," Thurs, 9pm, **Nat Geo**. Well-done special explains many of Superman's powers through gravity, but that costume's durability remains a mystery. -- "Inside the Actors Studio: Dustin Hoffman," Sun, 9pm, **Bravo**. Hoffman's a master raconteur; don't miss the *Olivier* tale. -- "Kyle XY," Mon, 8pm, **ABC Family**. Best thing we've seen on **Family**; alien teen with great intellect lands on Earth. But can this series sustain the quality of ep1? -- SA

**Worth a Look:** "Broken Trail," Sun, Mon, 8pm, **AMC**. 2 long nights in the saddle, but a solid western, beautifully shot. -- "Banshee," tomorrow, 8pm, **Oxygen**. Car jacking and violence on *Gerry Laybourne's* network? But it works by evoking a dark, depressing mood. -- "American Eats: Pizza," Thurs, 10pm, **History**. Entertaining summer series starts well with the \$30bn/yr pizza industry. -- "Huff," season finale, Sun, 10pm, **Showtime**. No word on renewing "Huff," if so, this finale brings some closure. -- "Catherine Tate Show," Wed, 11pm, **BBC America**. A total hoot. -- "Guests of the Ayatollah," tomorrow, **Discovery**. Retelling of the '79 takeover of the US Embassy by the hostages and Iranians; galling to hear Iranians praise the terrorists. -- NY's *Secret War*, Tues, 10pm, **Court TV**. Great look at the NYPD's terrorism squad; amazing surveillance footage. -- "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia," season 2 premiere, Thurs, 10pm, **FX**. *Danny DeVito's* arrival certainly helps.

#### Basic Cable Rankings

(6/12/06-6/18/06)

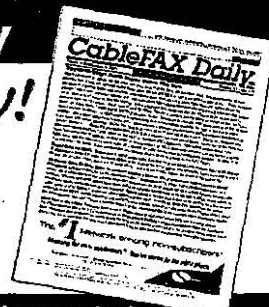
Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2.5	2156
2	USA	2.4	2141
3	TNT	2.3	2055
4	TBSC	1.8	1580
5	LIFE	1.5	1351
6	NAN	1.4	1220
7	TOON	1.3	1136
8	FOXN	1.2	1092
8	HALL	1.2	911
10	DISC	1.1	993
10	SPK	1.1	974
12	HGTV	1	913
12	FX	1	912
12	AMC	1	902
15	ESPN	0.9	841
15	MTV	0.9	825
15	SCIF	0.9	801
15	FAM	0.9	779
15	HIST	0.9	768
15	CORT	0.9	750
21	A&E	0.8	739
21	CMDY	0.8	726
21	TVLD	0.8	689
24	FOOD	0.7	584
24	LMN	0.7	351
24	SOAP	0.7	324
27	CNN	0.6	583
27	ESP2	0.6	566
27	TLC	0.6	566
27	VH1	0.6	540
27	APL	0.6	535
27	BET	0.6	499
33	BRAV	0.5	413
34	EN	0.4	344
34	TTC	0.4	297
34	WGNC	0.4	252
34	GSN	0.4	247
34	DHLT	0.4	235
34	NGC	0.4	228
40	TWC	0.3	278
40	MSNB	0.3	247
40	TVGC	0.3	243
40	HLN	0.3	226
40	OXYG	0.3	194
40	TDSN	0.3	188
40	WE	0.3	182

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

### Bringing the Dream to Manhattan

If you find yourself in the vicinity of Madison and 45th today, you may think that "American Idol" auditions have hit New York City. But a different kind of "Soul Patrol" will be queuing up at the Roosevelt Hotel. Gospel Music Channel's "Gospel Dream" search is making its Big Apple debut, holding auditions through tomorrow for the reality series. "Dream"—which returns this fall along with sponsor Ford—has tapped AI contender George Huff to steer its near-Broadway cattle call. Auditions then move to San Diego, Kansas City, Houston and beyond in search of gospel singing stars of the future. The channel is also making its way into America's homes. Comcast is rolling out GMC (this month, adding Detroit), while Cox, Charter, Verizon and more than 30 other affiliates have launched the channel. "On Comcast, we're positioned between NFL Network and ESPN HD," says GMC vice chairman Brad Siegel. "So our audience is way larger than any other 'niche network' out there. Our so-called niche is a giant chunk of America." With President Bush yesterday signing into law legislation that stiffens the fines for decency infractions, GMC is already helping its affiliates promote the family-friendly appeal of its chart-busting content. "When you think of all the discussions going on with indecency on television, there's going to be a large segment of America, whether Christians or not, that will enjoy this network as a positive entertainment alternative in their home," GMC pres/ceo Charley Humbard says. As a 24/7 music channel with content ranging from hip hop, rap and rock-infused gospel that skews young to contemporary gospel that skews older, "we're really family-safe," he adds. "Gospel Dream" is just one way that GMC makes its presence felt at the local level. It also taps into the huge radio market (some 80m listeners weekly) for gospel by crafting local promos using its pool of artists to tout affiliates in radio and cross-channel spots. Coming this fall: a suite of 7 VOD channels targeted to Latinos, youths and country music fans. —SB

**Highlights:** "Look Up in the Sky: The Amazing Story of Superman," tomorrow, 1pm, A&E. An excellent, and at times sensitive, send-up of the Man of Steel. For boomers, it's worth it to see how Jimmy Olsen (Jack Larson) and Lois Lane (Noel Neill) of TV's "Superman" (1953-7) look today. — "3 of Hearts," tonight, 9, Bravo. One of the more unusual docs we've seen on basic cable; the 8-year story of a loving (at first) ménage à trois that apparently videotaped much of their lives. SA

**Worth a Look:** "A Girl Like Me," Mon, 9pm, Lifetime. If this interesting but predictable story about a gender-related murder is indicative of the new Lifetime, we're impressed. — "Backyardigans," Mon, 11:30am, Nick Jr. Special ep covers tea and its origins, bringing in the Ming Dynasty; cleverly done. — "Three Sheets," Sun, 9pm, INHD. Among the better shows on INHD's new Mojo block, designed to appeal to men, the most avid HD viewers. This one tours global watering holes. — "Looking for Stars," Mon, 8:50pm, Starz. Amusing; first micro series for Starz; the 10-min vignettes recap amateurs vying for a speaking part in a Nicolas Cage movie. — "THS Investigates: Deadly Waters," Sun, 8pm, E! Is it "Shark Week" already? SA

#### Basic Cable Rankings

(6/05/06-6/11/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.4	2130
2	DSNY	2.2	1948
3	TNT	1.9	1737
4	TBSC	1.6	1428
5	NAN	1.4	1299
5	LIFE	1.4	1264
5	TOON	1.4	1212
8	FOXN	1.3	1161
9	FX	1.2	1029
9	HALL	1.2	884
11	DISC	1.1	1014
11	MTV	1.1	963
13	SFK	1	945
13	HGTV	1	908
13	CMDY	1	903
13	AMC	1	901
17	HIST	0.9	842
17	SCIF	0.9	804
17	A&E	0.9	792
20	ESPN	0.8	726
20	FAM	0.8	716
20	TVLD	0.8	702
20	FOOD	0.8	682
20	CORT	0.8	667
25	ESP2	0.7	637
25	CNN	0.7	618
25	LMN	0.7	345
28	TLC	0.6	582
28	VH1	0.6	528
28	BET	0.6	510
28	APL	0.6	503
28	SOAP	0.6	292
33	WGNC	0.5	313
34	EN	0.4	357
34	BRAV	0.4	330
34	MSNB	0.4	320
34	TTC	0.4	301
34	OLN	0.4	259
34	GSN	0.4	228
34	TDSN	0.4	193
34	BIO	0.4	145
42	TWC	0.3	262
42	CMT	0.3	249
42	TVGC	0.3	236
42	HLN	0.3	236
42	SC	0.3	210

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

### Upfront Hits the Pause Button

DVRs are the talk of the upfront. Programmers, advertisers and agencies have grappled with how to pre-sell fixed advertising time for the upcoming season when TV itself is fast becoming unfixed. In addition to consumers' propensity for skipping commercials, a host of contentious issues surrounding fragmentation of audiences and content put the upfront on pause, delaying the close of deals by the unofficial Memorial Day deadline to this week. The biggest standoff ended Monday, when ABC (on behalf of its broadcast brethren) agreed to make upfront deals based on live Nielsen ratings while offering an option for advertisers wanting DVR ratings in their deals. On the cable front, it was telling that the first major deal was MTV Networks' unprecedented multiplatform feast sold to OMD. That deal bakes in its networks' linear programming with nonlinear properties, including broadband, VOD, podcasts, wireless and websites, such as Neopets.com. Another DVR litmus test, and the talk of yesterday's Innovations in Digital Advertising group meeting in NY, is Cablevision's now-delayed network DVR trial. From its "Sue us? Sue you!" stand-off with programmers and studios to the decision to freeze its NDVR plans, some 100 IDIA members (including Cablevision and other MSOs) discussed the ramifications of time-shifting. As IDIA co-founder Pat Dunbar said, "The question now is where do we go from here?" - SB

**Highlights:** "Yo Soy Boricua, Pa Que Tu Lo Sepas!" (I'm Boricua, Just So You Know!), Mon, 9pm ET/10PT, IFC. There's nothing subtle about *Rosie Perez*, so her directorial debut is straightforward, and largely about her. Still, an entertaining doc about Puerto Rico's history/culture. - "Queen and Country," Sun, 3pm, BBC Am. About as balanced a view of Queen Elizabeth as you could expect. Best bit: her chat with disabled athletes, when she lets her guard down. - "Meerkat Manor," tonight, 8, Animal Planet. Clever, playful look at a family of these cute, tiny (12 inches, 2lbs) critters. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Tiger vs Phil," Tues, 9pm ET, Golf. Great footage and we love a show that admits its subject (the Woods-Mickelson rivalry) is media hype. -- "Paloozaville," on demand, MagRack. A great actor in a series for pre-schoolers? Yes. *John Lithgow's* a treat. - "Ethical Edge," Sun, 6pm ET, MSNBC. A bit ambitious, but good overview of tech-induced ethical/safety issues. The lesson? Watch your kids constantly. - "Krakatoa: Volcano of Destruction," Sun, 9pm, Discovery. A useful look the 1883 eruption using primary sources. - "Countdown to Domsday," Wed, 9pm, SciFi. A sobering survey of 10 end-of-the-world scenarios. -- "Saved," Mon, 10pm, TNT. This series about a renegade EMT seems promising (TNT sent just 1 ep), but the ensemble needs work. -- "Waterloo Rd," Thurs, 9pm ET, 11 PT, BBC Am. Again, wish we'd received more than 1 ep, but the series about new teacher trying to reform bad school looks strong. - "Lucky Louie," Sun, 10:30pm, HBO. An updated "Honeymooners," sort of, with bad language and sans the magic. Great opening scene. SA

**Returning:** Sun, HBO: "Deadwood," 9pm; "Entourage," 10pm. - "The Closer," Mon, 9pm, TNT. -- "The 4400," Sun, 9pm, USA. - Bridezillas, Sun, 10pm ET, WE.

#### Basic Cable Rankings

(5/29/06-6/04/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.5	2304
2	ESPN	2.3	2058
2	USA	2.3	2057
4	DSNY	2.1	1859
5	TOON	1.5	1345
6	NAN	1.4	1284
6	CMDY	1.4	1263
8	TBSC	1.3	1207
8	LIFE	1.3	1203
10	FX	1.2	1053
10	FOXN	1.2	1024
10	HALL	1.2	864
13	SPK	1.1	1031
14	DISC	1	950
14	HIST	1	935
14	HGTV	1	922
14	SCIF	1	819
18	MTV	0.9	849
18	A&E	0.9	823
18	FAM	0.9	793
21	TVLD	0.8	732
21	AMC	0.8	710
21	FOOD	0.8	672
21	CORT	0.8	655
25	TLC	0.7	674
25	CNN	0.7	594
25	LMN	0.7	361
28	VH1	0.6	529
28	BET	0.6	489
28	SOAP	0.6	284
31	ESP2	0.5	458
31	APL	0.5	445
31	EN	0.5	434
34	BRAV	0.4	350
34	TTC	0.4	343
34	OLN	0.4	249
34	WGNC	0.4	249
34	OXYG	0.4	247
34	SC	0.4	238
34	NGC	0.4	211
34	GSN	0.4	210
34	WE	0.4	210
34	BIO	0.4	153
44	TWC	0.3	289
44	MSNB	0.3	279
44	TVGC	0.3	259

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

## The Other VOD Upfront

When Comcast held what it billed as the 1st VOD upfront Apr 21, it touted On Demand channels in which it has a stake such as muscle-tastic **ExerciseTV**. The slew of free VOD channels that helped build Comcast on Demand since '02—but didn't give a stake to the MSO, or get paid (or linear) for their efforts—weren't invited to break bread with advertisers. Yesterday, a select group of savvy Free On Demand programmers got their spotlight on Madison (actually, Park) Ave. Credit *Mitch Oscar*, evp of **Carat Digital**, for staging what he called a mini-VOD upfront. The groundbreaking event featured 5 indie On Demand programmers pitching to advertising influentials that included brand marketers and reps from **Time Warner Cable**, **Cox** and yes, **Comcast**. Japanimation-based **Anime Network**, hip music programmer **Concert**, product showcase **Expo TV**, Gen Y sports/music channel **Havoc TV**, and movie trailer-filled **Hollywood.com TV** received a snappy 5 minutes to pitch (no prob for masters of short-form attention-grabbing). Also pitching: the MSO-backed **Music Choice** and **Cablevision's Mag Rack** and **Sportskool**. All stressed their cable HHs, core audiences and unique and gross monthly views. Expanding from VOD to broadband and mobile content, they also outlined opportunities for advertisers wishing to take advantage of cutting edge video platforms on cable and beyond. *SB*

**Highlights:** "Lovespring Intl," Mon, 11pm, **Lifetime**. With a major nod to **BBC Am's** "The Office," this improv, faux doc from "Will & Grace's" *Eric McCormack* about a dysfunctional dating service is a riot. Sometimes obvious, but lots of belly laughs. -- "Opus Dei & the DaVinci Code," Sun, 10pm, **Hallmark**. Former friar's balanced look at the semi-secretive religious society and *Dan Brown's* mistakes. -- "4400 Special," Sun, 10pm, **USA**. Great re-cap of last season; new eps start 6/11, 9pm. -- "Footballer Wives," season 4 premiere, Sun, 10pm, **BBC Am**. *Tanya, Tanya, Tanya*. -- "Cheap Seats," season 4 premiere, Mon, 11:30pm, **ESPN Classic**. A hidden gem. Speaking of which, is that the Mavs' *Keith Van Horn* at the '96 Spelling Bee? *SA*

**Worth a Look:** "Dog Bites Man," Wed, 10:30pm, **Comedy**. This faux doc/comedy about TV news isn't as funny as "Lovespring Intl" (above), but it's got potential. -- "The Revolution," Sun 10pm, **History**. Series starts with a good mix of recreation and talking heads explode popular view of America's founding. -- "I Wanna Be a Soap Star," season 3, Thurs, 11p, **Soap**. Still a great concept. Watch for the judges' reactions to inept acting. -- "Space Race, The Untold Story," Sun, Mon, 9pm, **Nat Geo**. Impressive (good storytelling, great copies of Soviet spacecraft), but too much blurring of re-creation and real footage. -- "Icons," tomorrow, 7:30pm, **G4**. As **G4** diversifies, this bio series about new cultural movers opens with "Lost" and "Alias" creator *J.J. Abrams*. -- "Janice Dickinson Modeling Agency," Tues, 10pm, **Oxygen**. *Janice* annoys, but her naked models make very sensuous TV. -- "Queer Eye," season premiere, Tues, 10pm, **Bravo**. Lethal combination, the fab five and Vegas. -- "Falcon Beach," Sun, 8pm, **ABC Family**. Passable coming-of-age beach drama, but not family viewing. *SA*

### Basic Cable Rankings

(5/22/06-5/28/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.9	2588
2	ESPN	2.4	2213
3	USA	2	1770
4	DSNY	1.7	1479
5	NAN	1.4	1282
6	FX	1.3	1194
6	TOON	1.3	1163
8	TBSC	1.2	1118
8	LIFE	1.2	1092
10	FOXN	1.1	991
11	SPK	1	910
11	HALL	1	767
13	HGTV	0.9	776
13	FAM	0.9	773
15	DISC	0.8	704
15	MTV	0.8	702
15	TVLD	0.8	700
15	SCIF	0.8	694
15	HIST	0.8	693
15	AMC	0.8	670
15	CMDY	0.8	669
22	CORT	0.7	625
22	A&E	0.7	603
22	TLC	0.7	593
22	LMN	0.7	339
26	FOOD	0.6	520
26	CNN	0.6	505
26	BET	0.6	493
26	SOAP	0.6	279
30	OLN	0.5	360
31	ESP2	0.4	403
31	VH1	0.4	398
31	APL	0.4	393
31	BRAV	0.4	322
31	EN	0.4	315
31	WGNC	0.4	247
31	TDSN	0.4	212
38	TTC	0.3	295
38	MSNB	0.3	269
38	TVGC	0.3	248
38	CMT	0.3	211
38	OXYG	0.3	203
38	NGC	0.3	194
38	GSN	0.3	185
38	SC	0.3	183
38	DHLT	0.3	178

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

### Bringing the World to Long Island

A peek into the blogosphere reveals U.S. fans of "BBC World News" on BBC America and PBS are mighty envious of Cablevision subs. That's because next week the Dolans' customers will be the first on these shores to receive BBC World's 24/7 network. To trumpet Thursday's launch, the Beeb is holding a press breakfast in NY that day with *George Alagiah*, the face of BBC W's new morning news program. That's good news (Alagiah's an award-winning journalist) and bad news for those who were hooked on *Mishal Husain*, BBC W's whip-smart former Washington anchor. Husain, back in London, has a good excuse for being a no show—she's due to deliver twins any day. Not to worry. *Jeff Hazell*, global director of distribution for the channel, promises stateside news junkies will get the same high-caliber international reporting that boosted BBC A's ratings in the days following 9/11. Hazell points to *Kinsey* research showing that the appetite here for global news, including a British-accented perspective on what's happening in America, hasn't waned. If anything, U.S. viewers are even hungrier since CNN has trimmed its global bureaus and Canada's *Newsworld Intl* has morphed into *Al Gore's Current TV*. BBC W boasts 2,000 reporters, 250 foreign correspondents and more than 50 bureaus. "There are very few new networks that come to the table with an already established global brand of the highest quality," says *Lori McFarling*, svp affil sales and mktg for *Discovery Networks*, which is distributing the service here. "Consumers know what to expect: a network that is respected worldwide for the power of its international news coverage." SB

**Highlights:** "The Capitol," W-F, 8pm, **C-SPAN**. A gorgeous, 3-parter exploring the artistry and history of the building & shot in HD. **C-SPAN's** great access pays off with visits to off-limits cubbyholes. -- "Kitchen Nightmares," season 2 premiere, Wed, 9pm, **BBC Am**. Interesting ep since the chosen restaurant's cuisine (American soul food) isn't a nightmare, so tough-love chef *Gordon Ramsay* radically cuts his use of the F word. Still, the way he deals with things contains great business lessons. -- "Washington The Warrior," Mon, 9pm, **History**. Well, *GW* wasn't a great warrior at the start, but he improved—a lot. -- "Rescue Me," Tues, 10pm, season 3 premiere, **FX**. This firefighter series has evolved into a terrific ensemble piece, while retaining the *Denis Leary* hallmarks: heavy drinking, family dysfunction and frequent sex. -- "Supercoasters," Mem Day, 8pm ET/9PT, **Nat Geo**. A 2-hr special on roller coasters? Yep, it's that good. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Meet The Faith," Sun, 11am, **BET**. *Carlos Watson* coddles *Oprah* in her **BET** debut, but there's good insight on her inspiration. -- "Swimsuit Secrets Revealed," Mem Day, 10pm ET, **WE**. **WE** addresses a major concern of its audience: how to find the right suit for any body type. -- "Wanderlust," Mem Day, 9pm, **IFC**. A doc about road films is mixed with *Paul Rudd* and *Tom McCarthy* vignettes that add little. The doc alone's fine. -- "Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom: Global Wolf," Sun, 7pm, **Animal Planet**. Former **FCC** commish *Harold Furchtgott-Roth* will love this. "ETHS: Women of Sex & The City," Mem Day, 8, **E!** What about *Big?* SA

#### Basic Cable Rankings

(5/15/06-5/21/06)

Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.7	2423
2	USA	2.1	1881
3	DSNY	1.8	1579
4	ESPN	1.7	1581
5	TOON	1.4	1266
5	NAN	1.4	1225
7	TBSC	1.3	1134
8	FOXN	1.2	1093
8	LIFE	1.2	1089
8	FX	1.2	1052
11	HALL	1.1	795
12	SPK	1	946
12	HIST	1	929
14	TVLD	0.9	814
14	MTV	0.9	802
16	DISC	0.8	763
16	HGTV	0.8	738
16	FAM	0.8	691
19	CMDY	0.7	649
19	SCIF	0.7	639
19	A&E	0.7	637
19	AMC	0.7	626
19	CNN	0.7	620
19	CORT	0.7	610
19	LMN	0.7	350
26	FOOD	0.6	559
26	TLC	0.6	552
26	SOAP	0.6	275
29	BET	0.5	446
30	VH1	0.4	397
30	ESP?	0.4	397
30	APL	0.4	378
30	EN	0.4	342
30	BRAV	0.4	303
30	NGC	0.4	217
36	MSNB	0.3	276
36	TTC	0.3	261
36	CMT	0.3	260
36	TWC	0.3	233
36	WGNC	0.3	233
36	SC	0.3	226
36	TVGC	0.3	207
36	GSN	0.3	196
36	TDSN	0.3	184
36	DHLT	0.3	165
36	WE	0.3	163

\*Nielsen data supplied by ABC/Disney

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

### International Programmers Join Their Own Club

Add another coalition of programmers to your Rolodex as the **Ethnic Broadcasters Association** will announce its formation next week. Its genesis follows an initial meeting in March '03. *Elie Kawkabani* spearheads the group. His L.A.-based **Reach Media** distributes more than 20 ethnic channels on these shores. So what took so long to launch? *Charter members needed to find common ground and be assured they wouldn't be giving away competitive information, so there's no disclosure of distribution agreements or deal terms. Nor is it the EBA's intention to "gang up" on distributors, Kawkabani says. Instead, it aims to "educate" and become "an unbiased industry voice."* That means serving as a resource for advertisers and distributors seeking information on ethnic programming and marketing opportunities. In addition to exhibiting at trade shows and holding events, the group wants to make its voice heard on the Hill and weigh in on issues such as *must carry* and *a la carte*. But that's a long-range goal. For now, Kawkabani says, it just wants to spread the word and "be inclusive." Focused on recruitment, the EBA hopes non-programmers—including vendors, cable operators (particularly at the local level) and content creators—will join its ranks. **EchoStar** is a charter sponsor, and its vp of international programming, *Tracy Thompson*, is a member. But the EBA isn't carrying *Charlie Ergen's* water, Kawkabani says. *EchoStar can't vote and only EBA programming members (including radio, Internet, mobile and other non-TV platforms) can serve as officers. Besides founder and chairman Kawkabani, members include French programmer TV5Monde, the S Asian-focused American DesiTV, Greek-oriented Antenna TV and networks targeting Russian, Polish, Chinese, Japanese, African, Indian and other communities living in N America. Its membership roster is open to any foreign-language programmer with a presence here, although the emphasis is on non-Hispanic networks, which are now "mainstream" in America, Kawkabani says. SB*

**Highlights:** "Baghdad ER," Sun, 8pm, **HBO**. This is not the first time cameras have exposed the insides of a US military hospital in Iraq. **Discovery Health** did that brilliantly last Nov in "Front Line ER." Still, the graphic frankness of this piece will shock as personnel grapple daily with their emotions and the carnage caused by suicide bombers and improvised explosive devices. -- "Combat Diary," Thurs, 9pm, **A&E**. The ultimate reality show—footage from Iraq shot by Marines who originally intended it for their own use. But it's been expertly weaved into an unexpurgated and emotional look at one unit's experience. -- "Biography: Nigella Lawson," Wed, 9pm ET, **Biography**. A portrait with the sensuousness and self-deprecation of its culinary subject. **SA**

**Worth a Look:** "We Lost 800 Lbs," Thurs, 10pm, **Discovery Health**. A compelling update on 2 women who did. -- "Favela Rising," Thurs, 7pm, **Cinemax**. An amazing look at 2 men in the slums of Brazil who refuse to accept the drug-infested status quo. -- "Three Days in September," Thurs, 8:30pm, **Showtime**. *Julia Roberts* narrates this chilling look at Chechen rebels' seizure of a Russian school. **SA**

#### Basic Cable Rankings

(5/08/06-5/14/06)

Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.4	2156
2	USA	2	1834
3	DSNY	1.9	1672
4	LIFE	1.5	1356
5	TOON	1.4	1273
5	ESPN	1.4	1237
7	NAN	1.2	1071
7	TBSC	1.2	1066
9	FOXN	1.1	1020
9	SPK	1.1	962
9	FX	1.1	938
9	HALL	1.1	840
13	HIST	0.9	846
13	DISC	0.9	836
13	CMDY	0.9	809
13	HGTV	0.9	782
17	MTV	0.8	757
17	A&E	0.8	719
17	FAM	0.8	698
17	SCIF	0.8	671
21	CNN	0.7	635
21	AMC	0.7	623
21	TLC	0.7	592
21	CORT	0.7	587
21	LMN	0.7	347
26	TVLD	0.6	536
26	VH1	0.6	520
26	FOOD	0.6	502
26	SOAP	0.6	271
30	BET	0.5	449
30	APL	0.5	434
30	BRAV	0.5	410
33	ESP2	0.4	379
33	EN	0.4	346
33	OLN	0.4	303
36	TTC	0.3	285
36	TWC	0.3	280
36	MSNB	0.3	269
36	CMT	0.3	237
36	WGNC	0.3	235
36	HLN	0.3	228
36	TVGC	0.3	212
36	NGC	0.3	206
36	GSN	0.3	200
36	TDSN	0.3	174
36	WE	0.3	159

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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

## A Woman of The Times

Vivian Schiller's modesty is genuine; she'd never green light a tribute to herself. But there was no chance we'd allow **Discovery Times Channel's** founding GM to slip away quietly to become head of NYTimes.com. Not after she's meant so much to intelligent, insightful cable fare, witness multiple Emmys and Peabodys at **CNN** and **DTC**. Besides her charm, the Schiller intellect dazzles. Coupling her departure last Friday with that of wunderkind **Mark Shapiro**, who left **ESPN** last summer, and you have a sizeable brain drain on cable programming. That intelligence, and tremendous passion, allowed Schiller to move easily in several worlds. Besides being a top-notch programmer, Schiller also worked the business side gracefully, generating ads and buzz for **DTC**, gaining carriage (\$39m), overseeing budgets and personnel. The small but talented team she hired 4 years ago remains largely intact; her industry fan club is far larger. "It's rare when you find someone like Vivian, a person with a great news sense who is also a business executive," says **Lawrie Mifflin**, exec dir of TV and Radio, *The NY Times*. Adding to Schiller's degree of difficulty, for much of her tenure she had 2 bosses: The NY Times and **Discovery**. This prompted so many trips north she could probably pilot the DC-NY shuttle. Yet those jaunts, her integrity and what **Discovery Networks US** chief **Billy Campbell** calls her "news-junkieness" helped her conquer the minefield called The NY Times newsroom. And that trust led to a fabulous strand called "NY Times Reporting," where some of the paper's top journalists wrote stories while creating companion docs. The result was the award-winning railroad investigation "Trouble on The Tracks" and "The Hidden Cost of Gold," among others. Importantly for a Times' employee, Schiller's timing's been impeccable. The Channel's mission was to go behind the headlines, explaining and analyzing the news. With her razor sharp leadership, **DTC** delivered that quickly, commissioning docs like the award winning "Off to War," which followed a National Guard unit deployed to Iraq. Now as Iran heats up **DTC's** ready with a relevant doc. "Her instincts to commission shows on topical issues have been spot on," says **Bill Snee**, her first hire and now interim GM. "Or she may have a crystal ball." He's only half joking. SA

**Highlights:** "Little Man," tonight, 8, **Showtime**. Hate it, love it, debate it, watch it, before Mother's Day! An amazing story—a mother/filmmaker refuses to give up on her baby, born 100 days premature. -- "The Thick of It," tonight, 9 ET, **BBC America**. The unedited UK version of this faux political doc was a filthy mouthed hoot. **BBC A** removes the f word from the Yank version, but promises to keep it bawdy.

**Worth a Look:** "ETHS: Simon Cowell," Sun, 8pm, **E!** Sure, *Simon's* really a sweet guy. -- "My Celebrity Home: Hilary Duff," Wed, 9pm, **Style**. Lizzie sews. Who knew? -- "Runway Moms," Sun, 4pm, **Discovery Health**. Expectant models prove pregnant women are sexy. -- "Little People, Big World," tomorrow, 8pm, **TLC**. Dwarfs at prom. Poignant.

**Notable:** "Da Vinci's Lost Code," Sun, 10, **Discovery**. -- "Property Buzz," Sun, 9pm, **HGTV**. New real estate trends. -- "Lazytown," Mon, noon, **Nick Jr.** Season II of clever exercise-based series.

### Basic Cable Rankings

(5/01/06-5/07/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.5	2225
2	USA	2.1	1931
3	DSNY	2	1794
4	FX	1.5	1300
5	NAN	1.4	1297
5	TOON	1.4	1234
7	ESPN	1.3	1163
8	FOXN	1.2	1078
8	TBSC	1.2	1050
8	LIFE	1.2	1048
11	HALL	1.1	828
12	SPK	0.9	840
12	DISC	0.9	827
12	CMDY	0.9	817
12	MTV	0.9	805
12	HGTV	0.9	766
17	HIST	0.8	749
17	TVLD	0.8	735
17	SCIF	0.8	709
17	A&E	0.8	696
21	FAM	0.7	648
21	CORT	0.7	625
21	TLC	0.7	619
21	AMC	0.7	598
21	LMN	0.7	353
26	CNN	0.6	588
26	FOOD	0.6	510
26	BET	0.6	477
26	SOAP	0.6	271
30	APL	0.5	457
30	VH1	0.5	404
30	BRAV	0.5	394
30	NGC	0.5	273
34	ESP2	0.4	348
35	EN	0.3	299
35	TTC	0.3	280
35	MSNB	0.3	275
35	HLN	0.3	261
35	WGNC	0.3	228
35	TVGC	0.3	213
35	OLN	0.3	212
35	TDSN	0.3	177
35	GSN	0.3	173
35	DHLT	0.3	171
35	WE	0.3	152

\* Nielsen data supplied by Disney

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### VOD at CAB in ATL

The mood at this week's **Cabletelevision Advertising Bureau** annual conference in Atlanta was surprisingly convivial, given that operators and programmers shared the dais to discuss On Demand programming (and ad sales) platforms. Typically a heated topic on **National Show** panels, CAB's presidents panel was particularly refreshing for its show of candor and cooperation (*Cfax* 5/3). First came the obligatory chatter about bottom lines and the importance of network brands to drive viewers to a non-linear viewing experience. Then **Comcast** COO *Steve Burke* set the tone for the rest of the panel when he admitted that—scores of press releases from Philly and his recent VOD upfront notwithstanding—his On Demand programming stands to get lost (to desperate housewives?) without more network hit series. "Satellite has **HBO** but our HBO is better than satellite's because you can watch 'The Sopranos' anytime you want to watch it," he said. "But I also think we're in the very early innings. I think we have a product that can get significantly better." Comcast now has **CBS** and **NBC** hits, and is this close to deals with **Fox** and **ABC**. The key? Let 'em keep their ad revenue. The former CBS exec seated to Burke's left was none too excited about participating in cable's VOD dreams at one time. **Discovery's** *Billy Campbell* recalled his initial reaction to cable operators' desire for his content as "fearful." "We were scared of cannibalization," he confessed. Fast forward to today. Campbell now is hyped about original VOD content to drive viewers to key programs such as *Lance Armstrong's* special on cancer and *Ted Koppel's* first Discovery doc, tentatively slated for Sept. "Through much better conversations and collaboration and partnership, we've learned a lot," Campbell said. "What we are now saying is, 'Let's make sure we put our best [programming] on there.'" Best of all, advertisers' thirst for VOD is creating opportunities for programmers and operators. **Scripps** CEO (and VOD early adopter) *Ken Lowe* had the last word. "You can't sit still...there's only one way to coast, and that's downhill." —SB

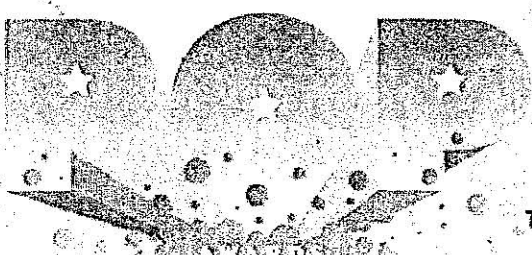
**Worth a Look:** "THS: That '70s Show," Sun, 8pm, **E!** *Mila Kunis* was 14 when she kissed *Ashton Kutcher*. "He couldn't have been nicer," she says. -- "Where's There's a Will," tomorrow, 9pm ET, **Hallmark**. *Marion Ross* as you've never seen her (did we really write that?) -- "Kathy Griffin Strong Black Woman," Tues, 9pm, **Bravo**. *Griffin's* standup brings grins, but no belly laughs as she whacks nearly everyone in Hollywood, including **E!** and *Oprah*, "who was so pompous when she lost weight that every pound she gains now is like a hug from Jesus." -- "Behind the Music: Ratt," Thurs, 9pm, **VH1**. This hair-to-day-gone-tomorrow look at Ratt's hard rise and even harder fall is good watching, guest reviewer *Mark Cavich* writes. See what a 24-7-365 hangover can do to talent. SA

**Of Note:** "Big Break V," Tues, 9pm ET, **Golf Channel**. Finale. -- "Braves at Mets," tonight, 7ET, **TBS**. Ya gotta believe. -- "Glenn Beck," Mon, 7pm, **Headline**. Debut of radio personality's talker. -- "Inside the Actor's Studio," Sun, 9pm, **Bravo**. Season premiere. -- "Big Love," Sun, 10pm, **HBO**. This quirky series is hitting its stride. The message from this week's ep: credit card debt can destroy orgasmic afterglow. SA

#### Basic Cable Rankings (4/24/06-4/30/06) Mon-Sun Prime

1	TNT	2.2	1945
2	USA	2.1	1894
3	DSNY	1.8	1595
4	TOON	1.4	1278
4	NAI	1.4	1227
4	TBSC	1.4	1224
7	LIFE	1.3	1172
7	ESPN	1.3	1140
7	FOXN	1.3	1139
10	HALL	1.1	795
11	DISC	1	937
11	SPK	1	935
13	A&E	0.9	854
13	MTV	0.9	842
13	HGTV	0.9	832
13	FX	0.9	826
13	CMDY	0.9	765
13	HIST	0.9	765
19	TVLD	0.8	727
19	FAM	0.8	725
19	AMC	0.8	682
19	SCIF	0.8	667
19	CORT	0.8	649
19	TSOU	0.8	91
25	TLC	0.7	633
26	ESP2	0.6	562
26	CNN	0.6	538
26	FOOD	0.6	531
26	LMN	0.6	303
30	VH1	0.5	464
30	BET	0.5	430
30	APL	0.5	424
30	BRAV	0.5	382
30	SOAP	0.5	241
35	EN	0.4	336
35	WGNC	0.4	276
35	NGC	0.4	248
35	SC	0.4	235
35	GSN	0.4	213
40	HLN	0.3	296
40	MSNB	0.3	289
40	CMT	0.3	287
40	TTC	0.3	274
40	TWC	0.3	266
40	TVGC	0.3	232

\* Nielsen data supplied by Disney



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### Moments Past And A Promising Future

If your subs know independent **AmericanLife TV** (nearly 11mln cable subs), they know it for family friendly lifestyle shows like the "Embassy Chefs" series (with uber enthusiastic host *Christopher Kent*) or for replays of "China Beach," "Combat!" and color versions of "The Honeymooners." A solid addition to the baby boomer targeted network's fare is "Moments That Changed Us" (series premieres May 7, 8pm), with *Walter Cronkite* the night's guest. Instead of a retrospective of the veteran **CBS** anchor's distinguished career, the program examines the circumstances surrounding Cronkite's special report of Feb '68, when America's most trusted newsman, fresh from a 3<sup>rd</sup> visit to Vietnam, told a divided nation it was unwise to seek military victory in the war. Other than a fabulous story about how a racist incident in his childhood influenced Cronkite's value system, the best part of the show is when Cronkite admits it was **CBS News** chief *Richard Salant* who insisted that the anchor's opinion be inserted into that special Vietnam broadcast. Unfortunately a 22-min show doesn't allow for a deeper look at Salant, whose no-nonsense style barred music and sound effects from news and documentaries and prohibited news personnel involvement in entertainment ventures (makes you wonder what he would have thought of **NBC** anchor *Ann Curry* flying to Namibia to interview *Angelina Jolie* about her efforts on behalf of poor children, but also asking Jolie why she's giggling more these days).

It's easy to see why **Animal Plant** is high on *Tristan Bayer* and *Vanessa Garnick*, the 20-something hosts and creators of "Caught in the Moment" (premieres July 10, 9pm). They're **MTV** attractive, articulate and promise to present wildlife in a new way. These next-generation filmmakers also are childhood friends who've been filming wildlife since they were kids. "It'll be like you're alongside of us as we're filming" in exotic locations, *Tristan* says. And every show will end with "a sort of music video, but with a conservation message," *Garnick* adds. **Discovery** has signed a deal with **EMI** to release the show's music, *Bayer* notes.

**Highlights:** "The Bette Davis Story," Wed, 8pm ET, **TCM**. A masterful weaving of narration, original material, film clips, music and interviews to tell *Davis'* story.

**Worth a Look:** "Yankeography: Tino Martinez," Mon, 11 pm ET, **YES**. Very detailed examination of the first sacker. - "NFL Draft," tomorrow, noon-10pm, ET and Sun, 11am-6pm ET, **ESPN**, **ESPN2** and **NFL Network**. **ESPN** goes live Sun, with 7 hrs vs just 4 hrs for **NFL**. Both provide 12 hrs Sat. The political conventions no longer rate gavel-to-gavel coverage, but the **NFL** draft does, on 2 networks! And for the 1st time **ESPN's** draft ticker will run during breaks. Is this a great country or what?

**Notable:** "Thief," season finale, Tues, 10pm, **FX**. Quietly among the season's best series. - Oh, the irony. **ESPN's** irascible but insightful "Pardon The Interruption" co-host *Tony Kornheiser* leaves his DC radio gig today hoping for fame on "Monday Night Football," as word comes that **ABC Sports** great *Keith Jackson* is departing the booth, his mellifluous tones to be immortalized on **ESPN Classic**. We wish both well.

#### Basic Cable Rankings

(4/17/06-4/23/06)

Mon-Sun Prime			
1	USA	2.3	2038
2	DSNY	2.1	1823
3	TNT	1.8	1660
4	TOON	1.6	1398
5	FOXN	1.4	1235
5	NAN	1.4	1228
7	TBSC	1.3	1186
7	LIFE	1.3	1134
9	ESPN	1.2	1055
10	SPK	1.1	999
10	HALL	1.1	833
12	MTV	1	916
12	TVLD	1	880
12	CMDY	1	886
12	AMC	1	882
12	FX	1	855
17	HGTV	0.9	821
17	DISC	0.9	814
17	HIST	0.9	802
17	A&E	0.9	794
17	FAM	0.9	771
22	CORT	0.8	725
22	SCIF	0.8	684
24	CNN	0.7	626
24	FOOD	0.7	619
24	TLC	0.7	598
24	BET	0.7	550
24	TSOU	0.7	79
29	ESP2	0.6	518
30	VH1	0.5	448
30	APL	0.5	410
30	LMN	0.5	249
30	SOAP	0.5	241
34	EN	0.4	382
34	MSNB	0.4	358
34	BRAV	0.4	347
34	TTC	0.4	316
34	WGNC	0.4	249
34	GSN	0.4	242
34	NGC	0.4	221
41	HLN	0.3	308
41	TWC	0.3	265
41	CMT	0.3	262
41	TVGC	0.3	233
41	OXYG	0.3	211

\* Nielsen data supplied by Disney



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### Broadbanding Together

We count at least 25 broadband channel spin-offs of cable networks, ranging from MTV Nets' high-energy posse of portals (**Overdrive**, **Uber**, **TurboNick**, **Vspot**, **Loaded**) to ad-free subscription services (**ESPN360**, **CNN Pipeline**). **Scripps Networks** is forging a high-speed path more in keeping with its lifestyle brands. The names may not be as sexy, but they're a hit with consumers—which is just the way they like things in Knoxville, TN.

Today Scripps soft-launches its latest broadband channel (they prefer 'vertical') at **HGTVBathDesign.com**, hoping to replicate the success of **HGTVKitchenDesign.com**, which is notching more than 1mln video views/month. Its first broadband vertical, **HGTVpro.com** (a utilitarian site for builders and contractors), launched more than 1 year ago; May 5 it starts catering to Latinos by introducing Spanish-language videos. The strategy is simple, says **Jim Sexton**, the Scripps svp who runs HGTV and DIY's online properties. "We're super serving our audience," he says. "With TV you've got a limited number of hours in the day that you can program against and there's ratings pressure in that space, but in the online space we can go deep and rich into these topic areas and do it relatively inexpensively and relatively efficiently." With new verticals on the horizon—**DIY** launches a woodworking vertical this month—broadband opportunities are limited only by the imagination. "They could be topic-based, such as kitchens or real estate, or could even get more niche," Sexton says. "You could take kitchens and break them down by styles—contemporary, country, modern, cottage—each with its own little channel." And then there's the 'G' in **HGTV**. "The gardens category is huge," he notes. —SB

**G4 Corners The Spock Market:** Captain's log, star date 2006: **G4's** young demo (18-34 male) is buying into the old "Star Trek" series. And selling — 'shares' of **Capt Kirk** (ticker **JTK**), **Uhura** (**UHU**), even **Nurse Chapel** (**CHP**). And chatting online about tribbles or what makes a good captain. This is just part of "Star Trek 2.0" (M-F, 11pm), an interactive take on the classic series whose screen borders **G4's** chocked with fun. On the right are **Spock Market** prices (shares in **Kirk** fall when he's in prison, rise when he's thrashing **Klingons**). The online chat is scrolling in the bottom middle of the screen; to the left are updated **Trek Stats** (how many times has **Spock** said 'logical'?). Only a **Vulcan** mind probe could get us dizzier than watching all this, but it's perfect for **G4's** multi-taskers. Since **2.0's** debut Mon, 11pm ratings are up 100%, **G4** pres **Neal Tilles** says. More important, there are 13K registered **Spock Market** traders. SA

**Highlights:** "Elizabeth I," pt 1, tomorrow, pt 2, Mon, 8pm, **HBO**. A 4-hr investment, but **Helen Mirren's** worth it. — "Too Hot to Handle," tomorrow, 7pm, **HBO**. Obviously **Laurie** is **Larry David's** serious half; her doc on global warming is sobering, but beautifully done. For possible solutions watch "Cool Fuel" at 8pm, **Science**. SA


**Worth a Look:** "Wingshooting," Wed, 9pm ET, **Sportsman Channel**. We're biased because the guest is our **M.C. Antil**, looking rugged but confused during a quail hunt. -- "Chris Issak's Guide to Jazz Fest," Sun, 8pm, **Fine Living**. Filmed before **Katrina**, but now loaded with updated info on New Orleans hotels, restaurants etc.

#### Basic Cable Rankings

(4/10/06-4/16/06)

Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.2	2013
2	DSNY	2	1736
3	TNT	1.7	1530
4	TBSC	1.4	1284
4	TOON	1.4	1238
6	NAN	1.3	1200
7	FOXN	1.2	1102
7	LIFE	1.2	1046
9	HALL	1.1	785
9	TSOU	1.1	125
11	SPK	1	907
11	ESPN	1	896
13	DISC	0.9	817
13	HGTV	0.9	814
13	MTV	0.9	800
13	CMDY	0.9	767
13	CORT	0.9	742
18	HIST	0.8	754
18	FAM	0.8	731
18	FX	0.8	716
18	SCIF	0.8	705
18	AMC	0.8	704
18	TVLD	0.8	698
18	BET	0.8	653
25	TLC	0.7	639
25	FOOD	0.7	633
25	LMN	0.7	342
28	A&E	0.6	582
28	CNN	0.6	573
28	ESP2	0.6	501
28	CMT	0.6	480
32	APL	0.5	455
32	VH1	0.5	441
32	NGC	0.5	275
35	EN	0.4	353
35	BRAV	0.4	327
35	WGNC	0.4	242



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### Nothing's Sacred

Plenty of time was spent at **National** this week discussing the death of old media. Dominating the chatter were mobile platforms, integrated products, wireless Sling-boxes, online gaming, AOL streaming classic shows (and new ones) and free broadcasts on the 'Net. Some suggested **Comcast's Matt Bond** wrote old media's epitaph Tues, declaring the era of new linear networks is over. To some, **NBC U's David Zaslav** was branded cable's paradigmatic apostate for his sacrilegious utterance during a panel that "small, mobile platforms" might not be as much of "a game changer" as many think. One thing seems certain—gospel music will be playing at whatever wake or awakening occurs. Occupying a National booth near **Hustler TV** (you get in trouble) and **Court TV** (you get sentenced) was **Gospel Music Channel**, whose founders were nonplussed by the location. After you pay your debt to society, you'll be "inspired, uplifted and entertained" by our array of music programming, pres/CEO **Charles Humbard** joked. Notice he didn't say redeemed—Gospel insists it's not faith-based TV. Indeed, the main criterion for music played on the channel is that the lyrics are uplifting, vice chmn **Brad Siegel** says. That's why Siegel joins traditional gospel with rock, soul, pop, hip-hop, jazz and instrumental (no lyrics). But there's a values test. "We ask if the artist is appropriate to our core audience," Siegel says. **Ozzy Osbourne** singing Gospel's theme "Amazing Grace"? "Probably not," he rules. And Gospel has rejected suggestive and violent ads, affiliate sales chief **Genia Edelman** says. Would the ad be "appropriate for an 8-year old?" Humbard asks. But the non-denominational outfit's not averse to appealing to religious groups. In fact, cable vets Humbard and Siegel have spread Gospel's gospel to churches and mega churches. They've also produced tours of gospel artists where they ask fans to write to their cable operators for carriage. That's worked—operators have received more than 30K emails and letters. The call's been answered for 6mln subs in 77 markets, and the young network forecasts 16mln subs by Jan 1. It's projecting another large jump to 23mln next year. Impossible for a linear channel these days? Oh, ye of little faith. SA

**Highlights:** "The Great Quake," Sun, 8pm ET, 7pm PT, **Nat Geo**. Well-done historical special about the San Francisco earthquake of 1906, despite the reenactments. — "Rocket Man," Tues, 10pm, **BBC America**. We've not seen anything with **Robson Green** in it that we didn't like—here's another. SA

**Worth a Look:** "Madonna on Parkinson," tomorrow night, 10, **BBC America**. It's **Madonna** talking and singing, but it's also **Parkinson**, the dean of British interviewers. — "I've Got a Secret," Mon, 11:30pm, **GSN**. This new version of "I've Got A Secret" gets away with things the original couldn't. And the no-name panel (except for baseball's **Billy Bean**) would be more at home on "Queer Eye." Still, the show's simple concept works, although we're expecting better secrets than a stud who breaks pencils with his derriere. — "Unacceptable Behavior," tonight, 11, **Si TV**. Not every skit in this comedy sketch show hits, but some do, and give fledgling **Si TV** credit for trying originals at such a tender age. SA

#### Basic Cable Rankings (4/03/06-4/09/06) Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2.2	1926
2	TNT	2.1	1921
3	USA	1.9	1711
4	NAN	1.5	1349
5	TOON	1.4	1292
5	LIFE	1.4	1263
7	TBSC	1.3	1202
7	ESPN	1.3	1185
9	FOXN	1.2	1029
9	HALL	1.2	883
11	SPK	1.1	1021
12	HIST	1	914
12	CMDY	1	862
12	FX	1	849
15	MTV	0.9	836
15	HGTV	0.9	804
15	A&E	0.9	796
15	AMC	0.9	764
15	SCIF	0.9	731
20	DISC	0.8	754
20	FAM	0.8	731
20	TVLD	0.8	701
20	CORT	0.8	675
24	CNN	0.7	623
24	TLC	0.7	596
24	FOOD	0.7	586
27	ESP2	0.6	533
27	VH1	0.6	504
27	BET	0.6	500
27	NGC	0.6	334
27	LMN	0.6	304
32	APL	0.5	442
32	SOAP	0.5	241
34	EN	0.4	364
34	TWC	0.4	339
34	BRAV	0.4	310
34	GSN	0.4	234
34	TSOU	0.4	40
39	MSNB	0.3	297
39	HLN	0.3	276
39	TVGC	0.3	263
39	CMT	0.3	261
39	TRAV	0.3	244
39	SC	0.3	222
39	WGNC	0.3	219

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### Sunday is Independents' Day

To Anil Srivatsa, evp, affiliate sales, **ImaginAsian TV**, and Randy Brown, svp, distribution, **Tennis Channel**, it's fitting that **National '06** is in Atlanta. As **CNN's** hometown, it's the spiritual home to countless entrepreneurs who dream of launching cable networks.

That spirit is why they were founding members of the **Association of Independent Programming Networks**, an organization of (currently) 16 networks launched Feb 1 that will have its coming out party Sunday in Atlanta. AIPN will hold a meeting and a reception at National for current and prospective members. It's more than just networking and recruitment. AIPN wants to quell any nervousness about its intentions—which, it emphasizes, doesn't include taking a collective and adversarial stance against distributors. Ever since **CableFAX** broke the news about this first-ever trade association of stand-alone programmers, AIPN has been flooded with inquiries from independents (*Cfax 2/2*). Cable operators also called to find out why not only **Tennis** and **laTV** but the **America Channel**, **Mid-Atlantic Sports Net**, **Horror Channel**, **Wealth TV**, **HDNet**, **Outdoor Channel**, **Lime**, **Soundtrack Channel** and others formed an incorporated, bylaw-making and membership fees-paying organization. Their response: rest assured, AIPN won't be filing collective comments to the **FCC**. They want to be more *Emily Post* (sharing best practices and protocol for how to conduct business with MSOs) than *Matt Polka* (much as they admire the affable **ACA** head). That means raising the bar and promoting the positive aspects of independents, says Srivatsa. "To become a member of the AIPN, there's a certain level of, for lack of a better word, quality control," he says. The group plans to use its buying power for discounts on satellite time, insurance, legal fees, PR. "We don't bring conglomerate leverage to the marketplace. We compete on our merits," says Brown. He adds, cable "enjoys a rich history of fabulous networks that were born out of entrepreneurial endeavors, from **ESPN** to **BET** to **CNN**." **SB**

**Highlights:** "Messiah," Mon, 9pm ET, **BBC Am**. Yes, another mystery on **BBC A**, but this 2-parter about a brilliant inspector is excellent, and gruesome. -- "God or the Girl," Sun, 9pm ET, **A&E**. We're not fans of **A&E's** reality, but if you can take the exploitation, watching young men torn between the priesthood and their girlfriends is good TV. -- "The Tournament," Mon, 10pm ET, **OLN**. Great spoof of reality TV via hockey. **SA**

**Worth a Look:** "Celebrity Food Fight," tomorrow, 9pm, **Food**. Not "Animal House," but celebs in a cooking contest. We'd prefer *Flounder*. -- "Shalom in the Home," Mon, 10pm, **TLC**. Tough love from Rabbi *Shmuley Boteach*, mildly useful. -- "Protocols of Zion," Tues, 7pm, **Cinemax**. Very disturbing look at anti-Semitism. -- "Honey, We're Killing the Kids," Mon, 9pm, **TLC**. One of the thrusts here is kids are watching too much TV. Not **TLC**, of course. -- "Spartacus," Mon, 10pm, **Nat Geo**. Fine, but we've seen this before. -- "Just for Kicks," Sun, 7pm, **Nick**. Promising series about teen girls and soccer—good values. -- "Back on Campus," tomorrow, 10:30pm, **ABC Family**. Ditch the values (mom's wasted at a frat party), but it's a hoot watching parents and their kids in college. -- "Though None Go With Me," tomorrow, 9pm ET, **Hallmark**. Predictable love story, but wholesome. **SA**

### Basic Cable Rankings (3/27/06-4/02/06) Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2.3	2001
2	USA	2.2	2005
3	TNT	1.8	1600
4	NAN	1.4	1256
4	ESPN	1.4	1240
4	LIFE	1.4	1229
4	TOON	1.4	1210
8	TBSC	1.3	1197
8	FOXN	1.3	1140
10	SCIF	1.1	968
10	FX	1.1	957
10	HALL	1.1	798
13	SPK	1	935
13	FAM	1	915
13	MTV	1	866
16	DISC	0.9	842
16	HIST	0.9	838
16	CMDY	0.9	803
16	HGTV	0.9	778
16	TVLD	0.9	762
21	A&E	0.8	711
21	AMC	0.8	704
21	CORT	0.8	660
24	VH1	0.7	649
24	TLC	0.7	621
24	CNN	0.7	603
24	BET	0.7	549
28	ESP2	0.6	576
28	FOOD	0.6	575
28	LMN	0.6	284
28	TSOU	0.6	62
32	APL	0.5	443
32	SOAP	0.5	228
34	EN	0.4	348
34	CMT	0.4	328
34	BRAV	0.4	315
34	TTC	0.4	308
34	MSNB	0.4	301
34	SC	0.4	259
34	WGNC	0.4	254
34	NGC	0.4	251
34	GSN	0.4	240
43	HLN	0.3	312
43	TWC	0.3	265
43	TVGC	0.3	233

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Shirley Brady and Seth Arenstein

### Boomer Rising

We've been hearing a lot about boomers lately. At a **Media Institute** lunch in DC last week, **Cox** pres **Pat Esser** talked up his plan to target "Echo Boomers," those tech-savvy, multi-taskers, aged 15-25. This week in NY, **TV Land's** presentation for media buyers and advertisers highlighted Echo Boomers' elders—the 40-60 crowd shunned on Madison Ave and on TV sets across America.

It wasn't the TVL's breakfast that made us pay attention to the overlooked Baby Boomer segment. It was demographer **Ken Dychtwald's** 5-pt plea to ad execs to stop chasing youths and place more value (and dollars) on a swath of the population that collectively wields \$2.1 trillion in spending power. Whether you call them zoomers, empty nesters or Dychtwald's term, "middlescents"—their ranks are expanding. They're affluent, available and grossly underserved by media. Why? "I can appreciate how a decade or two ago it would have made enormous sense to focus on young people and disregard people in their 40's and 50's," he told us later. "At that moment, the enormous swell in the population was the youthful demographic and there was still a dynamic where people reached their 40<sup>th</sup> or 50<sup>th</sup> birthdays and they were pretty set in their ways. But that's not the case anymore." That's why TV Land wants to start super-serving Baby Boomers (now 70% of its audience) and hired Dychtwald's firm to poll 2,000 or so of them on entertainment/media, including DVRs, broadband and HD. The results should be ready by September. Dychtwald's message stood out during an upfront season where, yet again, a slew of networks (**Lifetime**, **Spike TV**, **BBC A...**) are skewing younger and chasing a demographic break, 18-49, which dates to an era when you pitched to "the lady of the house." Sure, kids under 25 are changing the way media is consumed. But they also prefer iPods to TV sets. Meanwhile, the 40+ crowd is starved for great TV and marketing that reflects their lives, Dychtwald says. And they're open to brands and networks that try to understand them. As he quipped, 20% of boomers have changed their religion, "you think they're not going to change toothpaste?" **SB**

**Highlights:** "Liza with a Z," tomorrow night, 8, **Showtime**. This restored '72 concert is a piece of history, with **Minnelli** in her prime and great **Bob Fosse** choreography. -- "Huff," season 2 premiere, Sun, 10pm, **Showtime**. Again, protagonist **Huff** (**Hank Azaria**) is of no interest, but some of the support is excellent, including sexaholic **Oliver Platt**, sexy **Sharon Stone** and **Blythe Danner** as Huff's outrageous mother. -- "Transplant," Tues, 10pm, **Discovery Health**. Terrific doc about transplants. **SA**

**Worth a Look:** "Assume the Position With Mr Wuhl," tomorrow night, 10, **HBO**. A 30-min hoot if you loved **Wuhl** as "Arli\$\$," here he revises history for NYU students, plus show & tell. -- "Henry Rollins," tomorrow night, 10, **IFC**. For Dems only--**Rollins** and **Oliver Stone** blast Pres **Bush** with gusto. -- "Penn & Teller's Bullshit!" season 4 premiere, Mon, 10pm, **Showtime**. We particularly liked ep 2 on prostitution, where **Penn** tells us that legalizing the world's oldest profession would mean the end of pimps and the likely destruction of the oversized-hat market. **SA**

### Basic Cable Rankings (1Q - 12/16/05-3/26/06) Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.2	1984
2	DSNY	2.1	1873
3	TNT	2	1773
4	NAN	1.5	1324
4	TBSC	1.5	1313
6	ESPN	1.4	1259
6	LIFE	1.4	1241
6	TOON	1.4	1203
9	FOXN	1.3	1156
10	SPK	1.1	980
10	FX	1.1	947
10	HALL	1.1	801
13	HIST	1	903
13	SCIF	1	835
13	TVLD	1	832
16	MTV	0.9	838
16	DISC	0.9	801
16	HGTV	0.9	771
16	FAM	0.9	770
16	CMDY	0.9	770
16	A&E	0.9	767
22	CORT	0.8	716
22	AMC	0.8	704
24	TLC	0.7	600
24	BET	0.7	582
24	FOOD	0.7	579
27	CNN	0.6	581
27	VH1	0.6	570
27	LMN	0.6	289
30	ESP2	0.5	482
30	APL	0.5	442
30	BRAV	0.5	391
30	SOAP	0.5	232
34	EN	0.4	367
34	TTC	0.4	321
34	CMT	0.4	283
34	WGNC	0.4	265
34	SC	0.4	231
34	GSN	0.4	227
34	NGC	0.4	217
34	TSOU	0.4	44
42	MSNB	0.3	291
42	HLN	0.3	286
42	TWC	0.3	247
42	TVGC	0.3	234

# CableFAX databriefs



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in 2 markets and begin operating in digital only prior to the DTV transition. The requests are for **WGNM** in Macon, GA, and **WFGC** in Palm Beach, FL.

**VOD:** TVN snagged a multi-yr deal with **MTV Nets** and **BET Nets**. It'll supply VOD distribution and asset mgmt services for the slate of nets and employ its "TVNow" rapid turnaround system for time-sensitive content.

**Competition:** DirecTV is launching "CalcioDirect," a package aimed at Italian soccer fans. For \$19.99/month, subs get **GoTV**, **Fox Soccer** and Italian channel **SKY TG24**.

**Ratings:** FX's "The Shield" wrapped up Season 5 Tues, delivering 3.2mln total viewers/2mln adults 18-49. For the season, the show was down 13% in total viewers (3.2mln) and down 10% in 18-49s (2mln) vs Season 4. However, it was up in those demos 3% and 10%, respectively, vs Season 3. Season 6 will bow early next year, with FX set to decide this spring if those 10 eps will mark the series' final run. -- "South Park's" Season 10 premiere Wed benefited from its send off of Chef, notching a 2.8 HH rating/3.5mln total viewers. It was the top-rated program so far this year for **Comedy Central** among 18-49s (2.2). The lead-in also helped "Mind of Mencia" to its highest rating ever, a 1.9.

**Programming:** HBO signed a deal with *Russell Simmons* and *Stan Lathan* that will include series, specials and other projects. Initial work includes scripted series and comedy specials. -- **C-SPAN** features a trio of noteworthy programs this weekend. **Comcast's** *Matt Bond* participates on a panel on the future of communications, "American Perspectives," tomorrow, 9pm ET. *Mark Cuban* joins *Brian Lamb* on "Q&A," Sun, 8pm ET, and **Sling Media** CEO *Blake Krikorian* guests on "The Communicators," Sat, 6:30pm ET.

**Worth a Look:** "No Reservations," Season 2 premiere, Mon, 9pm ET, **Travel**. We like chef *Bourdain* less reserved, but his Japan and China trips are entertaining. -- "Thief," Tues, 10, **FX**. If subs can stomach the obscure plot (and that's asking a lot), *Andre Braugher's* worth it. -- "Psychic At Large," Wed, 10pm, **Sci Fi**. We can't knock a psychic who does readings at a nudist colony and while test-driving a BMW. -- "Hannah Montana," tonight, 9:30, **Disney**. Bring back "Lizzie McGuire," please. -- **Highlights:** "Gideon's Daughter," tomorrow, 8pm ET, 9PT, **BBC A**. We're not fans of writer *Stephen Poliakoff*, but we loved *Bill Nighy* in this understated father-daughter drama. -- "Dark Kingdom," Mon, Tues, 9pm, **Sci Fi**. A 4-hr investment, but a fine fantasy. -- "Sleep," Sun, 10pm ET, **CNN**. Forget about the national debt, find out about your sleep debt. -- "Deadliest Catch," season 2 debut, Tues, 9pm, **Discovery**. We predicted Season 1 wouldn't float—our bad.

**Online:** **MLB Advanced Media** entered into a multi-year deal that has it relaunching **YES' Website** (www.yesnetwork.com) in May. The site will offer video highlights of **Yankees'** games as well as podcasts and exclusive video.

### Basic Cable Rankings (3/13/06-3/19/06) Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.3	2105
2	DSNY	2.1	1862
3	TNT	1.9	1703
4	TBSC	1.5	1387
4	LIFE	1.5	1362
4	TOON	1.5	1360
4	NAN	1.5	1340
8	FOXN	1.3	1114
8	HALL	1.3	908
10	HIST	1.1	962
11	ESPN	1	944
11	SPK	1	915
11	TVLD	1	861
14	FOOD	0.9	841
14	HGTV	0.9	828
14	FAM	0.9	822
14	DISC	0.9	822
14	SCIF	0.9	802
14	MTV	0.9	786
14	FX	0.9	785
14	CMDY	0.9	777
14	CORT	0.9	733
23	A&E	0.8	729
24	TLC	0.7	647
24	AMC	0.7	623
24	LMN	0.7	351
27	CNN	0.6	582
27	VH1	0.6	578
27	BET	0.6	489
30	APL	0.5	483
30	ESP2	0.5	468
30	BRAV	0.5	372
30	SOAP	0.5	243
34	EN	0.4	367
34	TTC	0.4	325
34	WGNC	0.4	292
34	SC	0.4	257
34	NGC	0.4	252
34	GSN	0.4	232
34	DHLT	0.4	216
34	TSOU	0.4	44



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# PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Seth Arenstein (sarenstein@accessintel.com)

## Family Tears

We offer the following as a public service to those who will be recording (legally, of course) Sunday's "The Sopranos" (9pm, HBO): Trust your machine. The initial 10 minutes feature a very healthy and whole *Tony Soprano* (James Gandolfini), sans the hole left by a bullet shot at him by his brainsick Uncle. You're going to think your recording device has made a mistake or that HBO, somehow, showed the wrong episode. If you're patient you'll come upon a familiar patient and a tearful *Carmela Soprano* (Edie Falco) in a hospital and you'll know your DVR's worked. You'll also be entering a golden period for the series, Carm and the show's lesser characters.

We've attended a live taping of **Discovery Health Channel's** "Birth Day Live" several times, but it's still a surreal life experience. This year's 6-hr show, replayed tomorrow at noon ET, brings viewers within inches of 28 deliveries in 3 hospitals across the country. Live. It's fascinating TV watching the camera chronicle vaginal births, hearing doctors answer questions from Discovery Health's correspondents as they deliver babies. Yet the Caesarians are even better. That's because Discovery Health's 100 cameras put the viewer literally on top of the mother's belly. Once the surgeons begin, the camera brings you inside her abdomen, as layer after layer of tissue and muscle are painstakingly peeled back until a splash of fluid signals the coming of the baby's head. Without question this special, now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year, has prompted young people to think about a career in medicine. Hopefully it's also impressed parents-to-be to avail themselves of pre-natal care, the show's goal. The surreal life experience is seeing a delivery room filled with TV lights, audio techs, field producers and camera people, all in surgical scrubs, just inches from a mother to be and her doctor. And, yes, your reporter has been allowed in those delivery rooms, facing the business end of near-to-be mothers as they gave birth (a journalist is nothing if not a paid voyeur). Even more surreal is a visit to the control truck, hearing male directors saying things like 'Ms A is a first-timer, she's going to be in labor for a while, let's cut back to Ms B in San Diego, this is her 3rd kid.' - Speaking of mothers, it's a pleasure to welcome back *Shirley Brady* from maternity leave, returning today, appropriately, on St Patrick's Day.

**Highlights:** "The Shield," season finale, Tues, 10pm, **FX**. Stunning finale to a great season. - "Suburban Shootout" Wed, 9pm, **Oxygen**. A bizarre Brit hoot spoofing "Desperate Housewives," joins returning **BBC** hit "Nighty Night" (10pm).

**Worth a Look:** "The Real Housewives of Orange County," Tues, 10pm, **Bravo**. Their breasts aren't real, but this doc following wealthy wives could be an addiction. - "The Surreal Life," Sun, season premiere, 9pm, **VH1**. *Mrs Brady* may have missed her calling. - "Meth, Murder & Madness," Mon, 11pm, **Court TV**. Meth is a city problem, right? Wrong. - "Walkout," tomorrow, 8pm ET, 8:30 PT, **HBO**. A decent review of Chicanos' 1968 protests against east LA schools. - "John Edward Cross Country," tonight, 10, **WE**. The psychic returns, ya gotta believe.

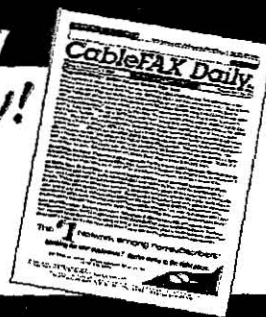
## Basic Cable Rankings (3/6/06-3/12/06)

### Mon-Sun Prime

1	DSNY	2	1778
2	USA	1.9	1752
2	TNT	1.9	1678
4	TBSC	1.5	1346
4	NAN	1.5	1344
4	TOON	1.5	1302
7	ESPN	1.3	1205
7	LIFE	1.3	1159
7	FOXN	1.3	1118
10	FX	1.2	1044
11	SPK	1.1	856
11	HALL	1.1	807
13	MTV	1	898
13	FAM	1	872
13	SCIF	1	871
13	TVLD	1	865
13	HIST	1	851
18	HGTV	0.9	826
18	DISC	0.9	791
18	VH1	0.9	790
18	CORT	0.9	731
22	AMC	0.8	734
22	CMDY	0.8	730
22	A&E	0.8	684
22	TLC	0.8	674
26	CNN	0.7	650
26	FOOD	0.7	634
26	BET	0.7	580
29	ESP2	0.6	524
29	BRAV	0.6	463
29	LMN	0.6	270
32	APL	0.5	427
32	EN	0.5	426
32	WGNC	0.5	309
32	NGC	0.5	271
32	SOAP	0.5	256
37	TTC	0.4	350
37	GSN	0.4	215
37	TSOU	0.4	41
40	MSNB	0.3	299
40	TWC	0.3	293
40	HLN	0.3	291
40	CMT	0.3	272
40	TVGC	0.3	256
40	SC	0.3	219

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**Programming Picks:** In lieu of our traditional *Programmer's Page*, our picks for the week; **Worth a Look:** "Cheerleader Nation," Sun, 10pm, **Lifetime**. Not a great deal of depth in ep1, as cameras follow HS girls tying out for a highly competitive cheerleading squad, but a major injection of youth for **Lifetime**. -- "Anything to Win: Tonya Harding," Sun, 8pm, **GSN** and "Through the Fire," Sun, 8pm, **ESPN**, **ESPNHD**. Difficult stories about a pair of athletes who've overcome much, despite long odds. The *Harding* piece is complete, honest and sad; the *Telfair* story is more upbeat because there are chapters yet to be written about the 6-foot, inner city kid who foregoes college for the **NBA**. Hopefully *Telfair's* future is brighter than *Harding's*, but last month a gun was found in the luggage of the sparingly used pro and he was suspended for 2 games. -- "How William Shatner Changed the World," Sun, 8pm, **History**. He didn't, but this tongue-in-cheek piece is a fun look at "Star Trek's" influence on technology. -- "Beyoncé Revealed," Sun, 8pm, **E!**. Put this in *Highlights* if you're a *Beyoncé* fan; tremendous home videos of the young *Knowles*. Interesting fact, a dance teacher noted her vocal talent at age 4. -- "Dog Whisperer," tonight, 8, **Nat Geo**. *Denise Richards* has problems with a nasty dog (and that's after *Charlie Sheen* left). -- "I Shouldn't Be Alive," tonight, season 2 premiere, 9pm, **Discovery**. The best series from new **Discovery** gm *Jane Root* returns; package includes weekend of survival stories, including the useful "How to Survive" Sun, 8pm. -- "Zoey 101," tonight, 8, **Nick**. Far be it from us to read into the fact that this special starring *Brit's* sis *Jamie Lynn Spears* is called "Spring Break-Up." -- "Blackbeard," Sun, 8pm, **Nat Geo**. Nicely done retelling of *Blackbeard's* story; strong production values. -- **Highlights:** "The Sopranos," Sun, 9pm, **HBO**. In a world of unnecessary news releases, **HBO** may have sent out the most unnecessary release ever when earlier this week it reminded TV writers "The Sopranos" returns Sun, 9pm. Our preview of eps 1-4 (*Cfax*, 03/02) pronounced the series to be in excellent shape, even if its protagonist isn't. If eps 1-4 are an indication, the season will emphasize ageing, succession and egos and the plot twists will come fast. Eps 1-3 move quickly, while ep 4 is slow and philosophical, although its ending will make your subs gasp, as will an appearance in ep 1's first minute. -- "Big Love," Sun, 10pm, **HBO**. Finally, an **HBO** series that's not dark, depressing or loaded with language that would make a trucker blush. Now we didn't say "Big Love's" family is typical Americana, but the twist (which we'll let your subs discover in a clever ep1 opening) makes for interesting, if a bit complicated, storytelling. This series is an acquired taste, let it breathe and by ep 4 loyal viewers will be hooked. -- "Warrior Queen Boudica," tonight, 8, **History**. Talk about wonder women, kudos to **History** for unearthing *Boudica*, wife, mother, queen and military strategist who defeated Roman forces several times on the British isles during the 1st century AD. -- "Battlestar Galactica," tonight, 10, **Sci Fi**. Strong season finale for an excellent series.

### Basic Cable Rankings (2/27/06-3/5/06) Mon-Sun Prime

1	USA	2.1	1904
2	DSNY	2	1777
3	TNT	1.8	1641
4	TBSC	1.5	1348
5	TOON	1.4	1279
5	NAN	1.4	1266
5	FOXN	1.4	1259
5	LIFE	1.4	1226
5	TVLD	1.4	1196
10	ESPN	1.3	1199
11	SPK	1.2	1084
12	MTV	1.1	939
13	FX	1	859
13	HIST	1	853
15	DISC	0.9	830
15	HGTV	0.9	776
15	SCIF	0.9	762
15	HALL	0.9	682
19	CMDY	0.8	734
19	A&E	0.8	724
19	CORT	0.8	696
19	AMC	0.8	674
23	FAM	0.7	649
23	VH1	0.7	645
23	TLC	0.7	622
23	BET	0.7	544
27	FOOD	0.6	563
27	CNN	0.6	544
27	LMN	0.6	276
30	ESP2	0.5	440
30	APL	0.5	427
30	SOAP	0.5	245
33	EN	0.4	371
33	TTC	0.4	340
33	CMT	0.4	316
33	BRAV	0.4	313
33	WGNC	0.4	242
33	TSOU	0.4	45
39	MSNB	0.3	299
39	HLN	0.3	250
39	TVGC	0.3	236
39	GSN	0.3	197
39	NGC	0.3	185
39	DHLT	0.3	184
39	OXYG	0.3	171

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Source: 2005 Beta Research Cable Operator Evaluation Study, rankings of Scripps Networks among basic cable network organizations.


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pres Pat Esser, Motorola CEO Ed Zander, HD Net pres Mark Cuban and former FCC chair Bill Kennard, who will moderate a session. What will the big buzz be? True convergence has arrived, Cablevision COO/National co-chair Tom Rutledge says. "Interactivity, interoperability and personalization is possible...it all works and works together." Rutledge will be a general session panelist; co-chair/Oxygen CEO Gerry Laybourne will moderate the opening session. — *CableWorld's Simon Applebaum*

**Oscar Programming:** Weather Channel will have Dr Heidi Cullen cover celebs' environmental views at tonight's "Global Green Pre-Oscar Party." Her reports will run this weekend on morning show "Weekend View" and Mon on "Evening Edition." -- Ryan Seacrest begins his role as lead anchor and managing editor of "E! News," Mar 13, 7pm. He'll handle Oscar coverage for the net this weekend. -- The Documentary Channel is running "Oscar Picks," a month-long festival of Oscar-nominated and winning films. And this weekend it begins work on initial series "DocTalk@USC."

**Programming:** HBO signed comedian Dane Cook to a multi-project deal covering series and specials. -- Sam Shepard will star in ESPN-produced horseracing movie, "Ruffian" (premieres June '07 on ABC; ESPN premiere date TBA). -- On NCAA "Selection Sunday," ESPNU carries the 1st-ever NIT selection show (Mar 12, 8pm ET).

**Programming Picks:** In lieu of Programmer's Page, some picks for the week ahead:

**Worth a Look:** "Little People, Big World," tomorrow, 8pm, TLC. A slice of life viewers don't see often, as TLC with great sensitivity follows the Roloffs, a family of 6, composed of little people (Mom and Dad are 4-feet tall) and avg-sized people (2 of the kids are avg size, 2 aren't). -- "Black. White," Wed, 10pm, FX. Great series idea, use Hollywood makeup to make a white family black and a black family white, then compare experiences. Provocative. Although the (real) white family's parents are dull, their teen daughter's interesting. -- "NASCAR Driven to Win," Wed, 10pm ET, Biography. The usual, nicely done bios; Kyle Busch and Kasey Kahne up first. **Highlights:** "The Queen's Sister," Sun, 8pm, BBC America. Loosely based on loose Princess Margaret, who's quite a drama queen.

**5 Qs with ESPNU vp/gm Burke Magnus:** ESPNU's 1st birthday's tomorrow.

**What's been its biggest success?** The number of live events, we've done 477.

That's almost 200 more than we projected. On distribution, we started at 2.5mln and with Adelphia, Insight, Mediacom, Dish, DirecTV and Verizon, we now sit at 8mln.

**What sport could become the next big college TV property?** Women's softball is a great TV sport because it's only a 2-hr window as opposed to baseball's 3 hours. And it features dominating performances. We had a game last week where the pitcher from Texas struck 18 batters in a regulation game. I'd also say baseball, hockey, women's volleyball and lacrosse. Wrestling has potential, too. **Plans afoot for the ESPNU brand?** We plan to roll out ESPNU through [broadband service] ESPN360, Mobile ESPN, ESPN.com and other new media platforms. We want to establish the ESPNU brand as the gateway to college content when it lives on these other platforms. I'd add ESPNRadio and ESPN the Magazine in there, too. **How will ESPNU at 2 years**

Basic Cable Rankings  
(1/31/06-2/26/06)  
Mon-Sun Prime

Rank	Net	Rtg	(000s)
1	USA	2.1	1917
1	TNT	2.1	1872
3*	DSNY	2	1739
4	NAN	1.5	1329
4	LIFE	1.5	1203
6	TBSC	1.4	1252
6	TOON	1.4	1202
8	FOXN	1.3	1136
9	ESPN	1.1	1012
9	SPK	1.1	966
9	FX	1.1	929
9	HALL	1.1	770
13	MTV	1	847
13	SCIF	1	834
15	HIST	0.9	837
15	DISC	0.9	790
15	A&E	0.9	782
15	FAM	0.9	757
15	TVLD	0.9	743
20	HGTV	0.8	735
20	CMDY	0.8	730
20	CORT	0.8	686
20	AMC	0.8	662
24	BET	0.7	557
24	LMN	0.7	278
26	TLC	0.6	551
26	CNN	0.6	550
26	VH1	0.6	539
26	FOOD	0.6	527
30	BRAV	0.5	430
30	ESP2	0.5	403
30	APL	0.5	397
30	SOAP	0.5	251
34	EN	0.4	334
34	TTC	0.4	299
34	WGNC	0.4	267
34	SC	0.4	241
34	GSN	0.4	219
34	NGC	0.4	209
34	TSOU	0.4	46
41	MSNB	0.3	294
41	HLN	0.3	288
41	CMT	0.3	238
41	TWC	0.3	236
41	TVGC	0.3	214

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## Getting the Download on Digital Simulcast

[archive web event]

"Digital Simulcast: Past, Present and Future"

**Speakers:** Mitch Auster, Senior Director, Solutions Marketing, Ciena; John Donahue, Senior Vice President of Engineering Operations, Comcast; Glen Hardin, Director of Digital Video Services, Time Warner Cable

To register and view the archive event, please log on at [www.ct-magazine.com](http://www.ct-magazine.com).

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**Programming Picks:** In lieu of *Programmer's Page*, some of our picks for the week follow. **Worth a Look:** "The Terri Schiavo Story," Sun, 10pm ET, **Wealth TV**. Tremendous background and insight on the case; both sides are heard. For those on overload, Wealth has a VOD play, running unedited interviews from the special. -- "THS Investigates: The Capitol Murders," Sun, 8pm, **E!**. Good review of Chandra Levy's awful death; nice work to remember Christine Mirzayan and Joyce Chiang, DC interns who were also mysteriously killed. -- "Friends & Crocodiles," tomorrow, 10pm, **BBC America**. We expected a lot more from this drama about modern business, but "Band of Brothers" lead *Damian Lewis* gives a good performance as an enigmatic yet brilliant bon vivant. -- "Mrs Harris," tomorrow, 8pm, **HBO**. As we did with "Friends & Crocodiles" (above), we felt this film about Dr Herman Tarnhower and Jean Harris was amusing and well acted, but fell short of the mark. Oh, well, two weeks until "The Sopranos" returns. -- "Titanic's Final Moments," Sun, 9pm, **History**. It's not virgin territory having divers go to Titanic's wreck, but it's still interesting. -- "Hamas: Behind the Mask," Mon, 8pm, **Discovery Times**. Again, *Discovery Times* stays true to its brand, going behind the headlines for in-depth investigation; filmmaker *Shelley Saywell* had tremendous access to Hamas. -- "Celebrity Fit Club III," Sun, 9pm, **VH1**. The finale; whose regime will reign supreme?

**Upfronts:** **Oxygen** is out to make '06 its first year with \$100mln-plus in ad sales, CEO *Geraldine Laybourne* said at the net's NY upfront press dinner Thurs. That's way up from \$15mln in '02. One attraction that could help matters is "Banshee," the net's 1st action-adventure original movie coming in Aug. Next on the upfront trail: **Cartoon Network** on Wed. — **CableWorld's** *Simon Applebaum*

**People:** *Chris Loneragan* is leaving **Discovery** after nearly 14 years. One of the industry's all-time good guys, Loneragan is moving to Charlottesville to become distribution pres of the **Italian American Channel**. -- *Heather Holmes* is leaving **TCM** after spending 10 years with **Turner**. -- *Paul Condolora* was elevated to svp/gm of **Cartoon New Media**. -- **Discovery** promoted *Steve Sidel* to pres, **Discovery Education**.

**Honors:** **CTPAA** picked its Golden Beacon nominations: **BET's** "BET SOS Telethon," **Court TV's** "Unexpected Heroes" and **VH1's** "VH1 and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis—A Partnership." The winner will be announced Mar 21, DC. -- **BET** and **HBO** tied for most '06 **NAMIC** Vision Award nominations with 5 apiece. Program nominees at **BET** included "Hip Hop After The Hurricane" and "Comic View;" **HBO's** program contenders include "Lackawanna Blues" and "Sometimes In April."

**On the Circuit:** Soccer great *Mia Hamm* heads a soccer clinic for 50 lucky kids in S FL tomorrow courtesy of **Comcast** and **sportskool**, which counts athletic instruction among its on-demand content. Comcast and sportskool also will

### Basic Cable Rankings (2/13/06-2/19/06)

#### Mon-Sun Prime

Rank	Net	Rtg	(000s)
1	TNT	2.4	2181
2	USA	2.1	1908
2*	DSNY	2.1	1839
4	NAN	1.4	1298
4	TOON	1.4	1241
4	LIFE	1.4	1170
7	TBSC	1.3	1136
8	FOXN	1.2	1025
8	HALL	1.2	832
10	SPK	1.1	960
10	FX	1.1	938
12	MTV	1	895
12	HIST	1	855
14	ESPN	0.9	814
14	SCIF	0.9	795
14	TVLD	0.9	757
14	CMDY	0.9	750
18	CORT	0.8	714
18	FAM	0.8	700
18	HGTV	0.8	700
21	DISC	0.7	674
21	A&E	0.7	638
21	AMC	0.7	631
21	BET	0.7	539
21	LMN	0.7	291
26	VH1	0.6	538
26	TLC	0.6	528
26	FOOD	0.6	502
26	BRAV	0.6	463
26	SC	0.6	369
26	TSOU	0.6	63
32	CNN	0.5	464
32	SOAP	0.5	254
34	APL	0.4	380
34	ESP2	0.4	337
34	WGNC	0.4	256
34	GSN	0.4	205
38	EN	0.3	290
38	MSNB	0.3	284
38	HLN	0.3	277
38	TTC	0.3	273
38	TWC	0.3	249
38	CMT	0.3	239
38	TVGC	0.3	207

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## THE FAXIES

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Debuting each spring at NCTA's National Show, *CableFAX's "The FAXIES"* is an annual award issue with brief, sometimes irreverent, recognition of the top stories, best MSOs, greatest flacks, most innovative programming, rising stars, best parties, schmoozers, do-gooders and, of course, tchotchkeys.



## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Seth Arenstein (sarenstein@accessintel.com)

### Mr Schleiff Goes to Washington

Thurgood Marshall Academy is located in Anacostia, one of DC's most dangerous areas. But that hasn't dimmed the verve of the 5-year-old public charter high school's founders. This group of young lawyers last year completed renovating a vacant but grand 100-yr-old school that now houses TMA's 320 students, who are steered toward careers in justice. Fittingly, **Court TV** chose TMA to unveil 'Careers in Justice,' its latest push to expose youth to careers in law. In addition to \$20K scholarships for college, online resources, film events and Capitol Hill visits, 'Careers' seeks to stimulate youth through face-to-face events. Court couldn't have done that much better than yesterday, letting 100 TMA students chat with Supreme Court Justice *Stephen Breyer*. Court knew Justice Breyer's a natural, and not just because he takes non-speaking bit parts in DC theatrical productions. Two years ago a special about *Brown vs the Bd of Ed* on Court TV showed him to be entertaining, educational and completely at ease with students. Yesterday, describing his typical workday as mostly reading and writing, he joked, "See, if you do your homework well, you can get a job where you do homework for the rest of your life." But it was more than entertainment, as Breyer described law as a career where "you use your head and your heart," told of growing up with segregation and his high regard for *Thurgood Marshall*. And there were first-hand insights: "[The Justices] get along personally, even if we disagree on the merits... In my 12 years I've never heard a raised voice." After connecting with the kids in part by quoting *Yogi Berra* ("I never make predictions, especially when it comes to the future"), Breyer yielded to Court's sr editor *Fred Graham*, who told students, "You can skip your constitutional law class, you just got it from the horse's mouth." -- Court TV is building, too. It bought its 2nd remote truck and yesterday opened a Washington, DC, bureau. "Our first off-campus site," chmn/CEO *Henry Schleiff* joked. Why DC? "It's the capital of the justice system, with the Judiciary committee and the Supreme Court... and a great way for us to exploit Fred," he added. And not a bad place for Schleiff to lobby for cameras in the court and in the Supreme Court.

**Highlights:** "Citizen Black," Mon, 9pm, **Sundance**. A creative look at the views and exploits of newspaper magnate *Conrad Black*, although he spends most of his time avoiding the camera. -- "Footballers Wive\$," season III premiere, Sun, 10pm, **BBC America**. Shame that *Chardonnay's* gone, so we concentrate on the evil *Tanya*.

**Worth a Look:** "Knight School," Sun, 10pm ET, **ESPN**. The first film from **EOE** was a dramatization about basketball coach *Bobby Knight*. The best part was the end, when closing credits ran over clips of the real Knight handling the press. Bristol learned its lesson—the volatile Knight can be pretty good TV. In School, Knight works out 16 hopefuls who want to walk-on with his TX Tech club and shows why he was *Mike Krzyzewski's* mentor. -- "My Gym Partner's a Monkey," sneak-peak Mon, 9pm, **Cartoon**. Creative premise, a bright kid goes to a school populated by animals. Mostly fun, but lessons about diversity are underneath.

#### Basic Cable Rankings

(2/6/06-2/12/06)

Mon-Sun Prime

Rank	Net	Rtg	(000s)
1	USA	2.3	2075
2	TNT	1.9	1700
2*	DSNY	1.9	1693
4	LIFE	1.6	1298
5	ESPN	1.5	1319
5	NAN	1.5	1308
7	TBSC	1.4	1247
8	TOON	1.3	1163
8	FOXN	1.3	1149
10	SPK	1.2	1081
11	FX	1	871
11	HIST	1	863
11	FAM	1	860
11	SCIF	1	832
11	HALL	1	733
16	MTV	0.9	765
16	AMC	0.9	760
18	DISC	0.8	760
18	CMDY	0.8	735
18	HGTV	0.8	723
18	CORT	0.8	718
18	TVLD	0.8	705
23	A&E	0.7	670
24	TLC	0.6	561
24	FOOD	0.6	555
24	CNN	0.6	529
24	VH1	0.6	497
24	BET	0.6	490
24	LMN	0.6	267
30	ESP2	0.5	458
30	BRAV	0.5	435
30	APL	0.5	410
30	NGC	0.5	263
30	SOAP	0.5	236
35	EN	0.4	347
35	WGNC	0.4	265
35	GSN	0.4	224
35	TSOU	0.4	43
39	TTC	0.3	292
39	HLN	0.3	292
39	TWC	0.3	283
39	MSNB	0.3	269
39	TVGC	0.3	218
39	SC	0.3	198

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live-action "Hannah Montana," teaming singer/actor Billy Ray Cyrus and daughter Miley. New movies include the "Cheetah Girls" sequel.

**Ratings:** YES Net pulled a 1.2 for Wed's Knicks-Nets game, 33% higher than MSG's telecast of the game (0.9). It's the 1st time YES out-delivered MSG for a head-to-head Nets-Knicks contest with both nets at full distribution. -- The season finale of MTV's reality series "Meet the Barkers" pulled a 2.31 in the 12-34 demo Tues night. -- **Animal Planet's** "Puppy Bowl II" grabbed 6.7mln viewers on Super Bowl Sun, up 21% over last year.

**Programming:** C-SPAN will launch a monthly program called "USA Today Reports" on the last Fri of the month, 7pmET, to examine the news media as part of the weekly "Close Up on C-SPAN" series from **Close Up Foundation**. -- **NBC Mobile** will deliver highlights of the Winter Olympics to **MobiTV** mobile users.

**Cameras in the Courtroom:** Court TV's Henry Schleiff and chief anchor Fred Graham will star in video editorials, write newspaper op-eds and host online chat rooms as part of a campaign to get cameras in the Supreme Court.

**Online Stats:** CSTV logged 6.8mln page views at its Web site on Signing Day (Feb 1)—the day when high-school football players announced their college choices. A live press conference from Notre Dame had 7,700+ hits. -- The number of online searches increased 55% in Dec to 5.1bln, with **Google** gaining a 5-point increase to 49% of all searches, **Nielsen/NetRatings** said.

**Sponsorships:** Gospel Music sponsors the tours of Christian/Gospel artists Kirk Franklin and Casting Crowns.

**Honors:** Congrats to Cox's Anne Doris, honored with the Rosa Parks Living History Makers Award for business. And props to **Tennis Channel** pres/founder Steve Belamy, named inaugural 'Person of the Year 2005' by **Tennis News** and **Daily Tennis**.

**People:** Time Warner Cable hired Mike Roudi as vp, wireless ops, a new position where he will manage TW's jv with **Sprint-Nextel**. -- Former **Discovery** exec Amy Baker was named svp, ad sales for **History**; Mona Tropeano was named svp, ad sales ops & admin, **AETN**; and Mike Peretz was named vp, sales revenue mgmt, **AETN**. Marketing svp Artie Scheff left the company. -- **CSG** promoted Rae-Ellen Hamilton to vp, HR. -- **Nick** promoted Julia Pistor to evp, Nick Movies; Michelle Raimo was hired as svp, prod, Nick Movies. -- **Current** tapped Andrew Struse from **Nickelodeon** to be svp, on-air promo/creative services.

**The Week Ahead:** Among our non-Olympics cable picks, **Worth a Look:** "Cheer Squad," Sun, 9pm ET, **CSTV**, U GA's squad is up first, featuring tanned, athletic coeds in skimpy shorts (we didn't even notice there were guys, too); "Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show," Mon, Tues, 8pm, **USA**, there've been 24 US presidents since this event started (c'mon, does **CableFAX** bring you value or what?); "Hustle," tomorrow, 10pm, **AMC**, **TV Guide's** right, why is this "Ocean's 11"-like series on **AMC**? It's not a movie, a classic or American. But it's such a well-done drama

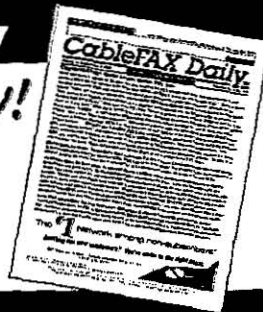
### Basic Cable Rankings (1/30/06-2/5/06) Mon-Sun Prime

Rank	Net	Rating	(000s)
1	USA	2.2	2000
2*	DSNY	2	1759
3	TNT	1.9	1735
4	FOXN	1.6	1396
5	TBSC	1.5	1354
5	NAN	1.5	1347
7	A&E	1.4	1223
7	LIFE	1.4	1139
9	TOON	1.3	1143
10	HALL	1.1	816
11	DISC	1	947
11	SPK	1	930
11	ESPN	1	926
11	FX	1	904
11	SCIF	1	889
11	MTV	1	852
17	HGTV	0.9	823
17	HIST	0.9	809
19	TVLD	0.8	734
19	CMDY	0.8	720
19	CNN	0.8	711
19	CORT	0.8	669
23	FAM	0.7	658
23	TLC	0.7	624
23	AMC	0.7	616
23	BET	0.7	589
23	LMN	0.7	287
28	FOOD	0.6	566
28	VH1	0.6	499
30	ESP2	0.5	480
30	BRAV	0.5	400
30	SOAP	0.5	250
33	APL	0.4	369
33	EN	0.4	358
33	MSNB	0.4	346
33	TTC	0.4	345
33	WGNC	0.4	285
33	GSN	0.4	242
33	NGC	0.4	204
33	TSOU	0.4	42
41	HLN	0.3	296
41	CMT	0.3	260
41	TWC	0.3	231
41	TVGC	0.3	220

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Seth Arenstein (sarenstein@accessintel.com)

### Fore (Play)

We chided **The Golf Channel** last year, calling it "an unabashed purveyor of sex" for "The Natalie Gulbis Show," its reality series about the 18-yr-old pro golfer who looks so good in swimsuits she wears them in a calendar shoot, chronicled dutifully by Golf's cameras (*Cfax*, 12/02). So, imagine our surprise late last month when marketing materials for season V of Golf's ratings hit, the reality/competition series "Big Break," featured, you guessed it, a swimsuit calendar. But this calendar lacks a teenage pro golfer, although there's nothing unprofessional about the women on its pages. These 11 ladies have spent weeks in a grueling golf skills competition, battling nerves and each other on "The Big Break V Hawaii" (begins Tues, 9pm ET). Still, we had to ask: Has there been a radical shift in Golf's marketing, using skin to appeal to its predominantly male demo? There's no tectonic change, or even a platonic one, we're told. "Being in Hawaii led us to do [the calendar]," producer Jay Kossoff swears. "We wanted to show that these women can carry themselves well on the course and off." While sex sells, "at the end of the day, research shows our viewers want to see good golf," Kossoff says. Indeed, these women can swing—and they're good golfers. Like *Katie Ruhe*, 24, who poses cat-like on the calendar's cover in a 2-piece hot pink number, nearly all the women play **Futures**, the **LPGA's** developmental tour. And to be fair, not everyone is a 20-something. 34-year-old *Kim Lewellen* was a top collegiate golfer (first team All American at UNC) who took time off to become a wife and a mother. That she's back in game shape is evident as she frolics in the Hawaiian sand in a black bikini. But, really, this series is about golf, we promise. In fact, before Tues' ep is done, one woman will be ordered to leave the islands. -- Golf Channel was locked into Hawaii last year, well before Hawaiian teen *Michelle Wie* ignited the women's game (*Cfax* 9/20). Will *Wie* make a cameo? "Aw, you don't want to know that," Kossoff laughs. "It's just a bonus that we've got this show now from Hawaii," he says. A big break, you might say.

**Highlights:** "John Waters Presents: Movies That Will Corrupt You," begins tonight, **here!**. Waters' intros/wraps are an unrestricted, vulgar hoot. -- "360 Degrees of Oscar," 6am on, thru Mar 3, **TCM**. Sumptuous Oscar buffet.

**Worth a Look:** "S of Nowhere," season finale, tonight, 8:30 ET, **The N**. *Spencer's* sexuality is uncovered. Finally! -- "Dominick Dunne," Mon, 10pm, **Court TV**. Good review of *Versace's* murder. -- "Puppy Bowl II," Sun, 3pm, **Animal Planet**. Canine counter to that other Bowl. -- "Falling in Love with Girl Next Door," tomorrow, 9pm, **Hallmark**. Incurably cute romance with *Shelley Long* (in the tooth) and great views of Catalina. -- "I Missed Flight 93," tomorrow, Sun, noon, **A&E**. The lucky ones from 9/11; 1st 30 mins are strong.

**Black History Month:** A half-black/half-white person examines race as he views *Rosa Parks's* remains (interstitial, **Current TV**); *Cathy Hughes* interviews *Dick Gregory* (Feb 26, 10pm, **TV One**); The Birmingham Black Barons (*Willie Mays's* old team) face the Bristol Barnstormers in a vintage **Negro League Baseball** game (Feb 24, 4pm ET, **ESPN Classic**).

### Basic Cable Rankings (1/23/06-1/29/06) Mon-Sun Prime

Rank	Net	Rtg (000s)
1	USA	2.4 2116
2*	DSNY	2.3 1988
3	TNT	2 1786
4	NAN	1.5 1373
4	FOXN	1.5 1299
6	TBSC	1.4 1268
7	FX	1.3 1155
7	TOON	1.3 1135
7	HALL	1.3 899
10	LIFE	1.2 1114
11	SPK	1.1 981
11	SCIF	1.1 914
13	ESPN	1 935
13	DISC	1 884
13	MTV	1 863
13	HIST	1 857
13	TVLD	1 839
18	HGTV	0.9 836
18	CMDY	0.9 771
18	CORT	0.9 758
18	BET	0.9 711
22	A&E	0.8 694
23	AMC	0.7 648
23	ESP2	0.7 611
23	TLC	0.7 580
26	CNN	0.6 568
26	FOOD	0.6 560
26	FAM	0.6 553
26	VH1	0.6 543
26	LMN	0.6 315
31	APL	0.5 447
31	BRAV	0.5 377
31	SOAP	0.5 219
34	EN	0.4 366
34	TTC	0.4 355
34	MSNB	0.4 310
34	WGNC	0.4 258
34	NGC	0.4 245
34	GSN	0.4 233
34	OXYG	0.4 225
34	TSOU	0.4 41

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## PROGRAMMER'S PAGE with Seth Arenstein (sarenstein@accessintel.com)

### Still A Mystery

The title of *The History Channel's* "Secrets of the Black Box" doesn't quite match the show's content. Fortunately. A show's title is supposed to grab people's attention and its marketing material is aimed at promising the world. A release for Black says the show will reveal "the real stories" behind airline disasters, courtesy of information contained in the flight data recorders, aka the black boxes. In fact, the first ep (Thurs, 8pm) is so good because it doesn't do that. Sometimes black boxes are of limited utility. Such is the case with the infamous **Korean Airlines 007**, downed by a Soviet fighter in September '83, and the subject of Thursday's show. History's presentation is impressive, using narration and graphics to bring a level of detail to 007 that's likely to increase many of your subs' understanding of aviation. Most important, it proposes competing theories and acknowledges parts of the story remain a mystery. "In any accident investigation you never know the absolute cause," former **Natl Transportation Safety Board** lead investigator and show host *Douglas Feith* told us. And in the politically charged case of 007, "there are many questions that nobody is willing to answer." Many of them concern Soviet thinking. Why didn't the Soviet fighter move closer to the airliner, allowing the pilot to identify it as a commercial flight? Why didn't he fire tracer bullets first or intercept the aircraft? And why did Soviet ground staff interpret KAL 007 as a threat? Still, some facts are known. KAL 007 went off course at inception, straying into Soviet airspace. Perhaps the crew made a mistake programming navigation control instruments. It appears the crew also failed to monitor the plane's progress, "they weren't doing all the cross-referencing they needed," Feith said. Yet, due to a quirk in the navigation system it was possible for the crew to think it was flying over its navigational waypoints even though it wasn't (History's graphics show this beautifully). What should viewers take away? "The unfortunate sacrifice of lives was not in vein," Feith said. "We've learned lessons from [aviation] accidents and have improved aviation safety... we're not trying to scare people, we're trying to educate."

**Highlights:** "Budd Boetticher," Wed, 8pm, ET, **TCM**. This terrific doc profiles the eventful life of the director of "Bullfighter and the Lady" ('51) and pays tribute to *Randolph Scott*. - "Make It Real," Mon, 3:15pm, **Sundance**. A personal and shocking look at AIDS in Kenya.

**Worth a Look:** "Twisted Sunday," Sun, 8pm, **Nat Geo**. A little gem about a man who films twisters by driving through them. - "America's Tsunami," Sun, 9pm, **Discovery**. Whew, not for the faint of heart.

**Noteworthy:** "CenterStage," Sun, 9:30pm ET, **YES**. Mike Ditka guests. Would T.O. be on his team? "No," he badmouthed his QB "in both places he played; and did that to coaches in both places he played...how many times you gotta get hit in the head with a board to realize it hurts? --"Katrina Weddings," tonight, 10 ET, **WE**. -- "Catherine Crier Live," 5pm, today, **Court TV**. Year-end special examines the year's biggest legal news stories/trials. -- "All-Star Holiday Party," Sun, 8pm ET, **Food**.

#### Basic Cable Rankings (12/5/05-12/11/05)

Mon-Sun Prime

Rank	Net	Rtg	(000s)
1	USA	2.4	2186
2	ESPN	2	1824
3	TNT	1.9	1750
3	LIFE	1.9	1677
3	SCIF	1.9	1611
6	DSNY*	1.8	1559
7	TBSC	1.6	1413
7	FOXN	1.6	1409
9	NAN	1.5	1388
9	FAM	1.5	1356
9	HALL	1.5	1068
12	TOON	1.3	1126
13	SPK	1.1	1022
13	MTV	1.1	1021
13	FX	1.1	937
16	HIST	1	851
17	CMDY	0.9	832
17	TVLD	0.9	815
17	A&E	0.9	809
17	HGTV	0.9	759
17	AMC	0.9	743
22	DISC	0.8	747
22	FOOD	0.8	710
22	CORT	0.8	702
22	LMN	0.8	393
26	CNN	0.7	644
26	TLC	0.7	594
28	ESP2	0.6	524
28	VH1	0.6	512
28	BET	0.6	446
31	EN	0.5	445
31	BRAV	0.5	429
31	APL	0.5	398
31	WGNC	0.5	303
31	SOAP	0.5	228
36	TWC	0.4	391
36	TRAV	0.4	347
36	GSN	0.4	235
36	NGC	0.4	207
36	TSOU	0.4	39
41	HLN	0.3	307
41	CMT	0.3	272
41	MSNB	0.3	257
41	TVGC	0.3	253

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### Being There

We experienced one of those eureka moments last Saturday. The setting was some 300 feet above the end zone, in a club-level luxury box at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia. We watched the first half of an exciting Army-Navy game from our seat in the first row of the box, behind thick glass, slightly streaked from what is euphemistically called a "wintery mix." While we were pretty high up, we had a fine view of the field. We had an even better view of the sea of midshipmen and ranks of cadets in the stands just below us, seemingly unaware of the wind and sub-freezing weather.

At halftime we availed ourselves of the suite's libations and fine meats and cheeses, provided by our programmer host. While we were feeding, the second half began. Fortuitously we were stationed in front a 42-inch plasma that was playing **CBS HD's** coverage of the game (yes, we'll admit to watching broadcast, but only on special occasions). Then it hit us--we'd driven almost 3 hours north to watch a game on TV? Worse, we weren't alone. More people were standing around the plasma than sitting in the suite's comfortable chairs facing the field. But in many ways the HD view was better than looking at the field. HD brought us closer to the action and the lighting was better. "Not a surprise at all," was **HD Net** chief *Mark Cuban's* assessment. "Sports look great in well-done HD. A lot better than through a streaked window." **ESPN HD** chief *Bryan Burns* erupted in laughter upon hearing our story: "I've been waiting for this for 3 years," he said, although he thought we were going to ask whether HD seriously threatens stadium attendance. (For the record, the pro leagues and colleges don't think so. In fact, "they want us to carry more of their games," Burns says. The experience of attending a game apparently trumps HD. In other words, it's a thrill to pay for the privilege of sitting in 20-degree weather.) At any rate, 3 years ago, when Bristol began its HD foray, its promo people wanted to use the phrase 'HD, better than being there.' As a former **NFL** and **MLB** employee, Burns blanched. "So we've stayed away from that language." Yet focus groups of HD owners regularly tell us HD is better than being there, Burns says. For big games, one HD owner told **ESPN** he invites friends to his home and charges them \$20 to park, Burns chuckled. Heck, our parking was free Saturday.

**Highlights:** "Codebreakers," tomorrow, 9pm ET, **ESPN**. The story of West Point's cheating scandal works on several levels; beautifully shot (but not at the Point).

**Worth a Look:** "Skeleton Stories," tonight, 10, **Discovery Health**. Heavy on recreations, but great mysteries & forensic anthropology. -- "Kath & Kim," Wed, 9pm, **Sundance**. Tough Aussie accents, but this dysfunctional comedy series is a hoot. -- "Daddy's Spoiled Little Girl," Wed, 10pm ET, **WE**. A camera, privileged girls and their daddies; some likeable, others repulsive. -- "Christmas in Boston," Wed, 8pm, **ABC Family**. It has zip to do with Xmas or Boston, but there's a great recipe for hot chocolate. -- "Xmas with Maya Angelou," tonight, 7, ET, **Hallmark**. Like a home movie, but fun. -- "The Killer Flu," Sun, 9p, **Nat Geo**. Chilling doc about possible pandemic.

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Rank	Net	Rtg	(000s)
1	USA	2.5	2272
2	ESPN	2.1	1928
3	LIFE	1.8	1642
3	TNT	1.8	1623
3	TBSC	1.8	1570
6	DSNY*	1.7	1441
7	NAN	1.5	1370
7	FOXN	1.5	1289
9	TOON	1.4	1213
10	FAM	1.3	1175
10	HIST	1.3	1137
10	HALL	1.3	940
13	SPK	1.2	1056
14	MTV	1	889
14	FX	1	880
14	SCiF	1	850
17	CMDY	0.9	801
17	A&E	0.9	784
17	CORT	0.9	771
20	DISC	0.8	715
20	HGTV	0.8	714
20	AMC	0.8	713
20	FOOD	0.8	700
20	TVLD	0.8	669
25	CNN	0.6	578
25	TLC	0.6	575
25	VH1	0.6	552
25	LMN	0.6	308
29	ESP2	0.5	463
29	APL	0.5	447
29	BET	0.5	442
29	EN	0.5	440
29	WGNC	0.5	302
24	MSNB	0.4	305
34	TRAVEL	0.4	292
34	NGC	0.4	236
34	OXYG	0.4	224
34	GSN	0.4	217
34	SOAP	0.4	206
40	TWC	0.3	297
40	HLN	0.3	265
40	BRAV	0.3	262
40	CMT	0.3	249
40	TVGC	0.3	235

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